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PRESENTS

500

MUST-SEE MOVIES

From iconic thrillers to sci-fi masterpieces – the essential selection every film fan should watch



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Welcome to 500 Must-See Movies!

We know what you're thinking: blimey, that is a *big* number. And yet the funny thing about putting this bumper-sized magazine together was how difficult it was to narrow it down to *just* 500...

This list was put together by the brains behind *Total Film* (and its sister titles *SFX* and *Horrorville*). We love movies obsessively, and we hope that this list demonstrates that passion. You'll find all the classics here: *Star Wars*, *Jaws*, *Halloween* and so on. But you'll also find plenty of titles old and new that you may not have encountered before.

To make things easier we've split the book into five handy genre-based chapters: comedy, action, thriller, horror and sci-fi/fantasy. When making a list like this there's bound to be a degree of crossover. *Alien*, for instance, could arguably sit in four of those sections – it'd be a bit of a stretch to place it in comedy, admittedly – but we've tried to position them in the chapter that seemed most appropriate.

How many of the 500 have you seen? Each section comes with a handy checklist so you can tick them off as you go. So clear your diaries, grab some snacks and get watching!



PART 1
COMEDY

100

MUST-SEE COMEDIES

Seen 'em yet?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Dumb & Dumber | ☐ All About Eve | ☐ Big |
| ☐ Juno | ☐ Four Lions | ☐ The LEGO Movie |
| ☐ Mary Poppins | ☐ Local Hero | ☐ Inside Out |
| ☐ National Lampoon's Animal House | ☐ Bringing Up Baby | ☐ Blazing Saddles |
| ☐ Borat: Cultural Learnings Of America For Make Benefit Glorious Nation Of Kazakhstan | ☐ There's Something About Mary | ☐ Withnail And I |
| ☐ Wayne's World | ☐ Toy Story | ☐ Booksmart |
| ☐ Monty Python And The Holy Grail | ☐ In Bruges | ☐ Monsters, Inc. |
| ☐ Weird Science | ☐ American Pie | ☐ Galaxy Quest |
| ☐ Dazed And Confused | ☐ Good Morning, Vietnam | ☐ The Producers |
| ☐ His Girl Friday | ☐ Duck Soup | ☐ The Grand Budapest Hotel |
| ☐ The Apartment | ☐ Trading Places | ☐ Bull Durham |
| ☐ Swingers | ☐ Heathers | ☐ Anchorman: The Legend Of Ron Burgundy |
| ☐ Planes, Trains And Automobiles | ☐ Four Weddings And A Funeral | ☐ Bridget Jones's Diary |
| ☐ This Is Spinal Tap | ☐ Elf | ☐ Ferris Bueller's Day Off |
| ☐ The Pink Panther | ☐ Game Night | ☐ Superbad |
| ☐ The Hangover | ☐ Midnight Run | ☐ Team America: World Police |
| ☐ Annie Hall | ☐ Dr. Strangelove Or: How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Bomb | ☐ Zoolander |
| ☐ Bridesmaids | ☐ Silver Linings Playbook | ☐ Harold And Maude |
| ☐ Mr Hulot's Holiday | ☐ Ghostbusters | ☐ Airplane! |
| ☐ Some Like It Hot | ☐ Mean Girls | ☐ The Naked Gun |
| ☐ Sullivan's Travels | ☐ Beverly Hills Cop | ☐ Forrest Gump |
| ☐ Sideways | ☐ Who Framed Roger Rabbit | ☐ Office Space |
| ☐ The Wedding Singer | ☐ It Happened One Night | ☐ Clueless |
| ☐ Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure | ☐ Austin Powers: International Man Of Mystery | ☐ The Mitchells Vs The Machines |
| ☐ Meet The Parents | ☐ Tootsie | ☐ Top Secret! |
| ☐ The Artist | ☐ The Big Lebowski | ☐ The Full Monty |
| ☐ Singin' In The Rain | ☐ South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut | ☐ M*A*S*H |
| ☐ The Rocky Horror Picture Show | ☐ Kind Hearts And Coronets | ☐ City Lights |
| ☐ The General | ☐ Clerks | ☐ Manhattan |
| ☐ Knocked Up | ☐ The Philadelphia Story | ☐ Despicable Me |
| ☐ Deadpool | ☐ Monty Python's Life Of Brian | ☐ The Blues Brothers |
| ☐ Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid | ☐ La Règle Du Jeu | ☐ Groundhog Day |
| ☐ The Man With Two Brains | ☐ When Harry Met Sally... | ☐ The Graduate |
| | | ☐ Beetlejuice |

DUMB AND DUMBER 1994

A simple plan.

01 Roommates Lloyd Christmas (Jim Carrey) and Harry Dunne (Jeff Daniels) set out on a cross-country road trip to return a briefcase to its owner, unaware that it contains a ransom fee; some very funny business involving cops, gangsters and the FBI ensues. The movie, for better or worse, that launched the career(s) of the Farrelly brothers, *Dumb And Dumber* serves up a decapitated parakeet, coffee spiked with laxatives, a traffic cop drinking piss and more, much more. Carrey and Daniels are equally riotous as the bird-brained buds, though the former – a red-hot star after *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* and *The Mask* – was paid a cool \$7m, while the latter pocketed just \$50,000. Prequel *Dumb And Dumberer: When Harry Met Lloyd* and belated sequel *Dumb And Dumber To* are both beyond terrible. **JG**



LAUGH YOUR HEAD OFF
Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels star as good-hearted friends Lloyd and Harry.

JUNO 2007

The kids are alright.

02 Diabolo Cody's pregnant teenage heroine was smart-mouthed, precocious and achingly cool, which could have made for an annoying and offensive trainwreck. But between Cody's Oscar-winning screenplay, Jason Reitman's deft direction and Ellen Page's layered and mature performance as the school kid who decides to give her baby away, *Juno* is fresh and funny with a heap of emotional power that hits you like a burger phone in the chops. The movie wowed critics and audiences alike, netting nominations, gatecrashing Top 10 lists and reaping a box-office haul of \$231m from a budget of \$6.5m. Pro-life/pro-choice debates bloomed. But *Juno* endures as an unusually honest portrayal of a clever, independent teenage girl. Even if she calls herself "the cautionary whale". **PA**



MARY POPPINS 1964

Fly a kite...

03 Only in the 1960s could a Disney kids' film be a scathing social satire. Think about it: beyond the supercalifragilisticexpialidocious adventures, here's the tale of a starchy Tory banker getting life lessons from an upstart servant who considers herself practically perfect in every way. Except, you know, with tunes and 'toons. A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, indeed. As dramatised in *Saving Mr. Banks*, author P.L. Travers bristled at Walt's whims, but the film benefits from precisely such wild juxtapositions: live-action versus animation; British character actors versus Dick Van Dyke's bizarre Cockney accent. Never overdoing the message, the film chips away at Mr Banks' armour (and ours) via the Sherman brothers' superb songwriting and the benevolent devil that is Julie Andrews, winning an Oscar on, remarkably, her film debut. **SK**

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S ANIMAL HOUSE 1978

Wild things.

04 The original frat-pack comedy, establishing the anarchic model for successors like *Dazed And Confused* and *American Pie*, John Landis' counter-culture-com caused outrage and giggles in equal measure. Tom Hulce and Stephen Furst are the two frat pledges who end up being taken in by Delta Tau Chi House, a fraternity infamous for its lack of academia. Before you can yell "Chug! Chug! Chug!", the duo are submerged in a life of parties, girls and, occasionally, exams. Stealing the focus entirely, of course, is John Belushi, fresh from *Saturday Night Live* and imbuing his frat brother John 'Bluto' Blutarsky with a bug-eyed madness as he spies on sorority girls having pillow fights and gulps down more booze than a Rolling Stone guitarist. Naturally, he becomes a United States senator when he finally graduates... **JW**

BEACH BODY READY

Borat (Sacha Baron Cohen) tries to fit in during his visit to the US.

BORAT: CULTURAL LEARNINGS OF AMERICA FOR MAKE BENEFIT GLORIOUS NATION OF KAZAKHSTAN

2006

Is niuuuuuice...

05 Ali-G star Sacha Baron Cohen may have seemed like a one-hit wonder, but he came back stronger than ever with this gleefully close-to-the-knuckle mockumentary. Sent over from Kazakhstan to probe the mysterious workings of America, Borat Sagdiyev is a journalist whose lack of political correctness wrongfoots all comers, in the process satirising the USA's preconceptions about Johnny Foreigner. The kicker? The audience is in on the joke but no one onscreen is. The Kazak people, needless to say, weren't impressed by the depiction of their country as a backwater of incest and anti-semitism. In fact, nobody was. Most of the participants Punk'd turned litigious, with one lawyer ending a request for \$100,000 damages, "PS: loved the movie. Can you sign a poster for my son, Jeremy?" **MG**





PARTY ON...
Mike Myers and Dana Carvey rock out as Wayne and Garth.

WAYNE'S WORLD 1992

Swing time.

06 Growing out of a recurring *SNL* sketch, *Wayne's World* wooed audiences with its pair of slacker metal-heads Wayne (Mike Myers) and Garth (Dana Carvey), whose only aims in life are to broadcast their cable access show from Wayne's basement (well, his parents' basement – he still lives at home) and to party. Then a slimy ad exec (Rob Lowe) looks to purchase their show and with it their souls, while also stepping between Wayne and his dream woman Cassandra (Tia Carrere). Bright and sweet-natured beneath its dumb exterior, this likeable comedy caught the zeitgeist (EXTREME CLOSE-UP!) to take \$183m from a \$20m budget (exsqueeze me?). *Wayne's World 2* is also excellent (not!) and Myer and Carvey reprised their characters at the 2008 MTV awards, and for *SNL* in 2011 and 2015. **JG**



MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL 1975

A knight to remember.

07 Back in 2000 we ranked *Monty Python And The Holy Grail* the fifth greatest comedy of all time and it's only aged like a fine elderberry wine in the years since. The Pythons' first original film parodies the legend of King Arthur, complete with musical numbers and sex farce interludes, and doesn't hit a bum note throughout its exceedingly silly 91-minute runtime. The narrative is more a framework for a series of sketches so good they've passed into legend themselves, taking in an encounter with the Knights that say Ni, an obnoxious French guard who bellows ridiculous insults and bloodthirsty bunny rabbits. This being Monty Python, the cast play multiple roles to rib-tickling perfection, the satire still stings and the gags are timeless – no wonder Eric Idle's Tony award-winning stage adaptation *Spamalot* was such a success. **JF**

WEIRD SCIENCE 1985

Boys will be boys...

08 Updating *Frankenstein* with a flirty nod and a wink, John Hughes' third film is saturated in the giddy blush of first love (and lust) as geeks Gary Wallace (Anthony Michael Hall) and Wyatt Donnelly (Ilan Mitchell-Smith) create the ultimate woman using their computer. Arriving in the gleaming form of Kelly LeBrock, 'Lisa' boasts beauty and intelligence and helps the guys uncover their inner awesome, fighting back against bullies that include a green-gilled Robert Downey Jr. Named after an Apple computer (and branded "*Mary Poppins* with breasts" by LeBrock), Lisa is every teen's dream and Hughes goes full steam(y) when it comes to the guys' somewhat contentious treatment of their creation. It's all part of his film's goofy soup, though, with Bill Paxton's Chet turning into a pile of poo and mutant bikers crashing the guys' party. You want weird? You got it. **JW**

**DAZED AND
CONFUSED 1993***The Slacker comes of age.*

09 2016's *Everybody Wants Some!!* was the spiritual sequel to Richard Linklater's early classic, offering the perfect excuse to revisit the Texan auteur's '90s gem. Set in 1976, on the last day of high school, *Dazed* is loaded with nostalgia. Linklater's rambling, day-in-the-life style became something of a trademark, as he zoomed in on the little details to reap poignant rewards. The film also showcased his knack for casting, with early roles for Ben Affleck, Matthew McConaughey and Milla Jovovich. Perhaps some of the authenticity came from the copious amounts of real beer chugged on set, or maybe it all emanates from Linklater's unique worldview. "The drama is so low-key," he explains. "I don't remember teenage life being that dramatic." Even stripped of drama, *D&C* still made it into Quentin Tarantino's all-time top 10. **MM**

HIS GIRL FRIDAY 1940*Hold The Front Page.*

10 Classic newsroom play *The Front Page* inspired several screen versions, but Howard Hawks' movie eclipses them thanks to a game-changing switcheroo. Hearing his secretary read star reporter Hildy Johnson's lines during auditions, Hawks pondered: what if Hildy was a woman – and, for good measure, the ex-wife of Machiavellian editor Walter Burns? The result is no longer just a rat-a-tat farce about the lengths journalists will go for a good story, but also a screwball romcom. To maintain the rapid pace Hawks wanted from sparring stars Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell, the screenwriters added (superfluous) dialogue so the actors could talk over each other. Undervalued on release, it still feels modern, both for its in-joke humour (listen for Grant's shout-out to 'Archie Leach': the actor's real name) and its genuinely dramatic Death Row plot. **SK**

THE APARTMENT 1960*The key to success.*

11 How do you follow up 1959's *Some Like It Hot*, one of the greatest comedies ever made? With *The Apartment*, another all-time classic, again scribbled by Wilder and the ever-sparkling I.A.L. Diamond, and once more starring Jack Lemmon. He plays C.C. Baxter, a New York insurance drone who attempts to climb the corporate ladder by loaning his brownstone to the company's execs so they might commit adultery in peace. Trouble is, Baxter himself is falling for one of his boss' favourites, elevator operator Fran Kubelik (Shirley MacLaine)... Winner of five Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director – rare indeed for a laughter – this timeless picture is also tender, cynical and risqué (*Saturday Review* dismissed it as a "dirty fairy tale"), skewering corporate politics, personal ambition and the battle of the sexes. **JG**

**SWINGERS 1996***True romance.*

12 Launching the careers of Jon Favreau, Vince Vaughn and Ron Livingston, who claim the script was partly based on their real-life friendship, this boozy dramedy was made for just \$200,000

after studios balked at director Doug Liman's plan to cast the relative unknowns in the lead roles. It's a good thing they did, because *Swingers* plays to the trio's strengths as anxiety-suffering wannabe actor Mike Peters (Favreau) returns to LA heartbroken and alone. When his buddies Trent (Vaughn) and Rob

(Livingston) step in they kick off a series of bar crawls, dating calamities and snappy mano-a-mano heart-to-hearts that are all the more effective because they're based on conversations the guys really had. And Vaughn's so good in it Spielberg immediately snapped him up for *Jurassic Park: The Lost World*... **JW**

ON THE TOWN

Recently single Mike (Jon Favreau) and his pals check out the social scene in L.A.

HOLIDAY HORROR
Steve Martin and John
Candy buddy-up for
a turkey of a journey.

PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES 1987

Under the bus.

13 Taking a break from high schools, teens and hairspray, John Hughes grew up with this scatterbrained road movie confronting advertising exec Neal Page (Steve Martin) with the kind of travel trauma rarely experienced by anybody who's not a London commuter. Page is thwarted at every turn by shower curtain ring salesman Del Griffith (John Candy) as he attempts to get back from New York to his family in Chicago in time for Thanksgiving, running the gamut of public transport with little hope of ever reaching his destination. Between the many chalk-n-cheese japes ("Those aren't pillows!") and pile-up of highway-set hilarity, Hughes' natural affinity for characters caught up in emotional cyclones shines through. It's not hard to see why this was Candy's favourite film that he made – the moving third act reveal hits like a freight train. *JW*

THIS IS SPINAL TAP 1984

Let there be mock rock!

14 Director Rob Reiner remembers veteran rock doc DOP Peter Smokler's bemusement on the shoot: "He kept saying, 'What's funny about this? This is exactly what happens!'" Too true. Drawing on rockumentaries like *The Kids Are Alright* for his parody of a dim-bulb Britmetal band's disastrous US tour, Reiner brought conviction to everything from quotable dialogue to ill-matched bread. Wonky Stonehenge props? Black Sabbath had similar issues with a nine times too large 'henge replica. Bassists stuck in stagepods? U2 got jammed in giant lemons. Christopher Guest, Michael McKean and Harry Shearer's endearing character studies help sustain an illusion so plausible, it rings down the years like notes plucked on Nigel Tufnel's 1959 special. *Tap* is cringe-com's painfully truthful pinnacle. **KH**

AMPED UP!

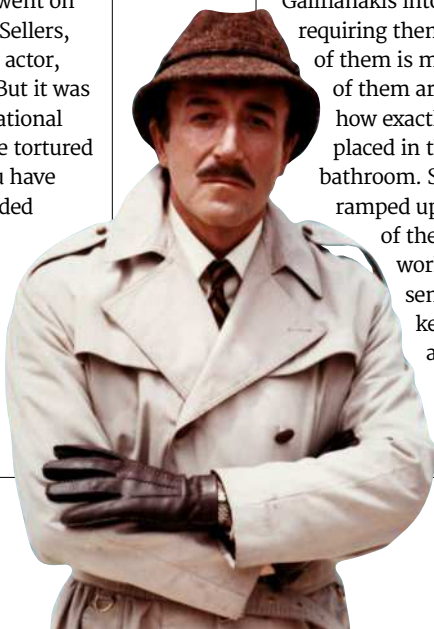
Follow metal band Spinal Tap as they promote new album *Smell The Glove*.



THE PINK PANTHER 1963

A Sellers' market.

15 Nominally, the star of Blake Edwards' crime comedy was David Niven as Sir Charles Lytton, the Raffles-like jewel thief who steals the eponymous pink diamond. But it was Peter Sellers, as bumbling police detective Inspector Clouseau, who walked off with the movie and went on to play the lead in five sequels. Sellers, always an insecure and difficult actor, disliked his own performance. But it was *Panther* that shot him to international fame: the inspired slapstick, the tortured pseudo-French accent ("Do you have a pheunne?"), the air of misguided infallibility, all captivated audiences – though Henry Mancini's jaunty theme tune and DePatie-Freleng's animated title character also deserve their credit. The first sequel, *A Shot In The Dark*, hit the same high. **PK**



THE HANGOVER 2009

The Jeong Ones.

16 There can't be many of us who haven't woken up at one point in our lives with little memory of what we got up to the night before. Todd Phillips' raucous ribtickler takes this notion to its illogical extreme, thrusting Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis into a post-stag nightmare requiring them to work out why one of them is missing a tooth, why all of them are minus a groom and how exactly a tiger came to be placed in their Las Vegas hotel bathroom. Subsequent instalments ramped up the chaos but lost sight of the reason why the original works so well – the battered sense of brotherhood that keeps our heroes plugging away, even when a crazed Mr Chow (Ken Jeong) is baying for their blood. **NS**

ANNIE HALL (1977)

Love is too weak a word...

17 It's rare that a film can best *Star Wars* without any complaints, but that's what happened at the 50th Academy Awards when Woody Allen's acclaimed neurotic-com examining a failed relationship scooped four major awards (Picture, Director, Screenplay, Actress). Accolades have flowed freely since then – #2 on the AFI's greatest romcoms list; the Writer's Guild of America's funniest screenplay – but it's not just a critical darling. There's a huge amount of affection for Allen's first film to find the sweet-spot between broad, zinger-laden comedy and Bergman-esque soul-searcher. Diane Keaton has never been better than in the iconic title role, although her dating history with Allen has left him struggling to convince people it's not *that* autobiographical ever since. True to form, Allen's probably the only person who's not a fan of *Annie Hall*. **MM**

BRIDESMAIDS 2011

Wiig out.

18 *Bridesmaids* made a comedy superstar of *Saturday Night Live* regular Kristen Wiig; co-writing and starring in the highest-grossing R-rated female comedy ever (and top-grossing Judd Apatow production) will do that. Wiig's Annie is at a crossroads when her best friend (Maya Rudolph) announces she's getting married, and maid-of-honour duties lead to escalating tensions. Director Paul Feig's tendency for improv adds to the lived-in believability of the friendships, and the dress-fitting scene provides the gut-bustingly hilarious centrepiece. As well as introducing the world to Wiig, *Bridesmaids* also provided a breakout platform for Melissa McCarthy (Oscar-nommed). And it remains a true one-off – despite a barrage of imitators – with Wiig recently confirming to *TF* that it was easy to say no to sequel. “I never thought twice about it,” she laughs. **MM**

MAIDS OF DISHONOUR

Annie (Kristen Wiig) and Helen (Rose Byrne) battle to be the best bridesmaid.



MR. HULOT'S HOLIDAY 1953

Beach games.

19 *Les Vacances De Monsieur Hulot* follows the title character (Jacques Tati) as he muddles his way through a disastrous holiday (the clue's in the title). Full of background noise but with minimal dialogue, this international hit announced director/star Tati and his onscreen alter ego to the world, building on the silent slapstick of Chaplin, Keaton et al and pre-empting Mr Bean. The visual gags are clockwork-precise and yet the film feels loose and laid-back, lent easy charm by its long takes and Hulot's indefatigable joie de vivre. Man's precarious place in the modern world, the awkward inanities of social interaction and France rediscovering its identity after the Second World War are the lightly worn themes, and Hulot would continue to battle and bumble in *Mon Oncle*, *Playtime* and *Trafic*. **JG**

SOME LIKE IT HOT 1959

Everybody's perfect.

20 Who but perennial cynic Billy Wilder could kick off a comedy with the St. Valentine's Day Massacre? Equally risky was basing most of the humour around cross-dressing with Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis as musicians donning drag to evade the Mob. Lemmon, tangoing rose in teeth with love-struck millionaire Osgood Fielding III (Joe E. Brown), is a joy – as is Curtis' note-perfect take-off of Cary Grant (Lemmon, agape: “Nobody talks like that!”). Above all, this is Marilyn Monroe's greatest and funniest film, even if she hated the screenplay and, given her shaky memory, it was hell to shoot. Commented Wilder: “Anyone can remember lines, but it takes a real artist to come on the set and not know her lines and give the performance she did.” Plus the sharpest sign-off line of all time. **PK**

SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS 1941

Make 'em laugh...

21 Comedy with serious undertones or scathing social exposé with comic top-dressing? Take your pick. John L. Sullivan (Joel McCrea) is the director of Hollywood slapstick comedies who yearns to get serious – so decides to dress as a hobo and explore the life of the American underclass. With a disenchanted starlet (Veronica Lake) for company he hits the road, but winds up in a brutal prison farm chained, beaten and worked near to death. There's only one thing he discovers that brings a little light into this hell-on-earth... a Disney cartoon. Comedy, not cries for justice, is what the wretched of the earth really want. How far writer/director Preston Sturges believed that is something else again, but he gifted the Coen brothers the title of Sullivan's projected social epic, “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” **PK**



SIDEWAYS 2004

In vino very funny...

22 *Total Film*'s '2005 Movie Of The Year' sent packing some heavyweight contenders (*Batman Begins*, *Million Dollar Baby*) with its deceptively light touch. Like many of Alexander Payne's dramedies, it has fits of broad, knockabout humour, not least a classic naked-man-chased-by-cuckolded-husband scenario. It's got a cosily familiar set-up – two old mates (Paul Giamatti, Thomas Haden Church) on a road trip (to wine country) – buoyed along by sun-kissed cinematography. The whole thing slips down so easily you almost don't realise it's an agonisingly honest meditation on middle-aged malaise, marriage... and Merlot. The characters are complex, fallible and real, even – rare for a buddy movie. Virginia Madsen and Church were Oscar-nommed but the shock snub was Giamatti. **ML**

THE WEDDING SINGER 1998

You spin me round...

23 These days, much of Adam Sandler's comedy feels plain obnoxious with its bully-banter and undertow of misogyny. *The Wedding Singer*, on the other hand, is pure charm as Sandler's crooner and Drew Barrymore's golden-hearted waitress both ready themselves to marry the wrong people before, natch, falling into each other's arms. Set in 1985, it's a movie full of fright wigs and fashion faux pas, while not one but two soundtracks were released to accommodate the wall-to-wall hits: Culture Club, Musical Youth, Spandau Ballet. It's hard to credit now, but this, at the time, was a rare foray into sweet-heartedness for Barrymore, who spent most of the '90s playing bad girls. She re-teamed with Sandler in the decent *50 First Dates* and the godawful *Blended*. **JG**

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE 1989

Dr. Woah!

24 The film that gave Keanu Reeves his early-years 'Dude' persona, this Stephen Herek directed slacker sci-fi casts Reeves as Ted 'Theodore' Logan and Alex Winter as Bill S. Preston Esq, two dim high-school metal-fiends who are only interested in making it big with their band Wyld Stallyns. Trouble is, history depends on them – and when George Carlin's axe-playing Rufus arrives in a time-travelling telephone box they have no choice but to tour the universe meeting the likes of Napoleon and Socrates (or "So-crates" as he's called). The critics panned it ("painfully inept comedy" sniffed *The New York Times*), but it caught on with teens, and a sequel, cartoon series, comic book and even breakfast cereal followed. A long-awaited second sequel arrived in 2020, while Reeves continued to play with the laid-back image in everything from *Point Break* to *The Matrix*. **JM**



PHONED-IN PERFORMANCES

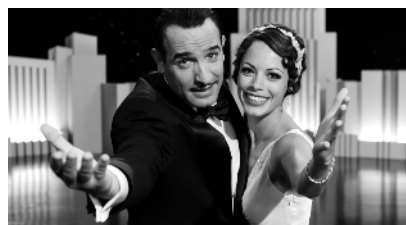
Bill and Ted time-travel with a host of ancient amigos.



MEET THE PARENTS 2000

Ben Stiller focks up.

25 Steven Spielberg and Jim Carrey originally circled *Meet The Parents* but it's hard to imagine they'd have conjured anything as funny as this Ben Stiller vehicle, directed by Austin Powers' Jay Roach. The premise is a universal fear writ large – meeting the prospective in-laws – and the more Greg Focker (Stiller) strains to match expectations, the more he nosedives. Who wouldn't when the patriarch who needs impressing is a retired CIA counter-intelligence officer played by Robert De Niro? The carnage, naturally, escalates, taking in septic tanks, house fires and some hi-jinks involving prized cat Mr. Jinx, while the smooth, soothing presence of millionaire ex-boyfriend Owen Wilson only aggravates matters. The inevitable sequel, *Meet The Fockers*, couldn't repeat the magic despite the dream casting of Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand as Greg's folks. **JG**



THE ARTIST 2011

Sssh!

26 Michel Hazanavicius' enchanting recreation of Hollywood's silent era is a real one-off, but don't call it a gimmick. By stripping away the sound, the story of an actor (Jean Dujardin) facing obsolescence proves that great cinema isn't about technology, but those using it – not least debonair Dujardin, perky Bérénice Bejo and canine clown Uggie the Dog. A deft blend of post-modern panache and "they don't make 'em like that anymore" nostalgia (Hazanavicius even filmed at an era-specific 22 frames-per-second), it's little wonder that such unashamedly old-school joie de vivre captured Academy hearts on Oscar night. Yet by forcing us to adjust to a new – or, rather, old – way of seeing, Hazanavicius playfully probes our mania for the next big thing while offering a refresher course on what makes a great movie. **SK**



SINGIN' IN THE RAIN 1952

The sound of music.

27 Ah, those backstage shenanigans. Screenwriters Betty Comden and Adolph Green resented having to use a batch of leftover songs by producer Arthur Freed and his partner Nacio Herb Brown. Gene Kelly reduced co-star Debbie Reynolds to tears, berating her for her limited dance experience. But none of this shows in the sheer unstoppable exhilaration of the end product. Hollywood always loves sending up Hollywood – never more so than in Kelly and Stanley Donen's musical, set in that period of uneasy transition when the movie colony was tussling with the arrival of sound. Every incident in the movie, it's said, is drawn from reality – the corncrake-voiced silent star (played by Jean Hagen) is reputedly based on Norma Talmadge. Meanwhile, Kelly, Reynolds and comic foil Donald O'Connor dance up a storm. **PK**

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW 1975

Dressed to kill.

28 A love letter to and send-up of sci-fi B-movies, starring Tim Curry in fishnets and featuring Meat Loaf on a motorbike... Richard O'Brien wasn't interested in playing safe with his infectiously raucous '70s musical, which flies its freak flag high. Boasting more catchy tunes than Justin Bieber's entire back catalogue, plus some of the raunchiest costumes this side of *Barbarella*, it's not difficult to see why it's been a midnight cult mainstay ever since. At the centre of it all, Curry's a whirling dervish of lipstick-smeared magnetism, oozing sex appeal in 'Sweet Transvestite' and bringing the tear-stained house down with 'I'm Going Home'. Director Jim Sharman hardly worked in the movies after. Well, when you've achieved perfection... **JW**



THE GENERAL 1926

Do the locomotive.

29 Budgeted at a then-whopping \$750,000, *The General* flopped on release and effectively cost its star/co-director Buster Keaton his filmmaking independence. Such craziness is hard to comprehend: it is, of course, a masterpiece, the slimline plot (train engineer Buster sets off in madcap pursuit when Union soldiers steal his two great loves, the titular engine and his girlfriend Marion Mack) used as a clothesline on which to peg a series of truly insane stunts. The best is saved for last, as a full-sized steam engine plunges through a burning bridge into the river bed far below. Action-packed, it's hilarious too, our hero's face never anything but stonily oblivious as the Civil War rages all about. In 2007, the American Film Institute ranked *The General* the 18th greatest US movie ever made. **JG**



KNOCKED UP 2007

Baby boomer.

30 Heralding a brief resurgence in the 'stoner comedy' sub-genre (*Pineapple Express* followed a year later), Judd Apatow takes a sitcom premise – woman falls pregnant after a one-night stand – and fleshes it out into a surprisingly poignant chuckle machine. Before she became romcom poison, Katherine Heigl is spikily watchable as the pregnant Alison, who attempts to form a relationship with stoner Ben (Seth Rogen) after their night together results in a baby. Rather than cramming his characters into a lesson about life and love, Apatow gives them room to breathe, making interesting observations along the way (Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann are a highlight). Of course, there are gross-out gags, too – the birthing scene alone had men and women wincing through their chuckles. **JW**

DEADPOOL

2016

Best Wade plans.

31 Is there a more perfect pairing of actor and character in all of superhero-dom than wisecracking Ryan Reynolds, and merc-with-a-mouth Wade Wilson, aka Deadpool? After a botched attempt to bring the character to the screen in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, Reynolds teamed up with director Tim Miller on a more faithful adaptation, embracing Deadpool's irreverent antics and fourth-wall-breaking asides to camera. Both an origin story and a mocking satire of the tropes of modern comic-book movies ("Woo! Superhero landing!"), *Deadpool* may lack the universe-ending stakes audiences expect from superhero blockbusters today, but it possesses creativity and comedy in abundance. Sequel *Deadpool 2* would up the ante with time-travelling soldiers and Brad Pitt cameos, but the scrappy original is DP at his best. **JF**

WADE A MINUTE
Maybe Ryan Reynolds *did* get this far on a superior acting method.



WHAT A PAIR

Gang leaders Sundance (Redford) and Butch (Newman).



BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID 1969

Buddy up.

32 OK, so a film whose heroes end up dying in a hail of Bolivian bullets might not appear ideally suited to a countdown of the greatest screen comedies. It's worth noting, however, that Paul Newman and Robert Redford's gunslingers wisecrack to the last in George Roy Hill's jokey anti-western, a film that sees them shooting from the lip as much as from the hip – even when they are being implacably hounded by an unshakeable super-posse. What they're chasing, in fact, is a perfect comic double act; Newman's bullish self-confidence cancelled out by Redford's withering disdain. ("Think you used enough dynamite there, Butch?" deadpans Sundance after his partner-in-crime inadvertently blows a train car to splinters.) Sure, they're scoundrels, but at least they're scoundrels who are fun to spend some time with. **NS**



THE MAN WITH TWO BRAINS 1983

Weird science.

33 Writer/director Carl Reiner (Rob's dad) and stand-up funnyman Steve Martin made four films together between 1979 and 1984; *The Man With Two Brains* is the pick of a good bunch. Martin plays Dr Michael Hfuhruhurr (pronounced Hfuhruhurr), the world's most brilliant brain surgeon, married to the gold digging Dolores Benedict (Kathleen Turner) but in love with a brain suspended in a jar. Meanwhile, the Elevator Killer is on the loose and Dr Alfred Necessiter (David Warner) is doing pioneering work transferring human brains into gorillas. This brand of frantic lunacy won't be to everyone's taste – the film gets a lot of mileage out of silly names, Hfuhruhurr's sexual frustration and Mad Scientist tropes – but, at its best, it's like an '80s Marx Brothers movie. When people talk about how Steve Martin used to be funny, they mean this. **JG**

ALL ABOUT EVE 1950

Theatre of cruelty.

34 Writer/director Joseph L. Mankiewicz said he wrote "for audiences who come to listen to a film as well as to look at it". Hence the urbane relish in his bat-black backstage comedy about narcissistic New York theatre folk, the deceptively complex script for which oozes acidity. Bette Davis wasn't the first choice, but she gives her imperious all to fading diva Margo Channing, while Anne Baxter is quietly ruthless as Eve, the rising star who slyly infiltrates Margo's orbit. In support, George Sanders drips disdain as Addison DeWitt, the suave theatre critic whose voiceover steers our perspective and sets a peppery tang. "I am essential to the theatre," he preens. And in its weaponised wit and withering riff on vacant fame, *All About Eve* remains an essential takedown of celebrity's moth/fame allure. **KH**

FOUR LIONS 2010

Comedy of terrors.

35 “I do think you have to go all the way with something like this,” said stunt satirist Chris Morris, the man who taught Phil Collins about “Nonce Sense” for his mock issues TV hit *Brass Eye*. Well-schooled in going “all the way”, Morris drew on three years’ research and wrote with *Peep Show*’s Jesse Armstrong and Sam Bain to draw out the human credulity of four British mujahideen from headline shock-mongering. Doing for terrorism what *Dr Strangelove* did for bombs, *Lions* revels in the grand comic traditions of ineptitude and juxtaposition then packs both with surrealism and sorrow. As Wookiee gags, absurdist wordplay (“You tomato’d your friend!”) and rampant idiocy mix with a sting and a sympathetic lead (Riz Ahmed), *Lions* does what Morris does best: goes where other comedies fear to tread. **KH**

LOCAL HERO 1983

Going native...

36 A gentle Scottish-set culture-clash comedy in the tradition of *Whisky Galore!* and *The Maggie* (though lacking those films’ undertow of malice), Bill Forsyth’s movie pits native Scots guile against global big business. Felix Happer (Burt Lancaster), a Texan oil tycoon, plans to site a giant refinery on an unspoiled stretch of Scottish coastline, and sends young executive Mac (Peter Riegert) to clinch the deal along with local rep Oldsen (Peter Capaldi). But soon the two young oilmen start succumbing to the charm of the locality. And then the tycoon arrives in person... Forsyth’s near-mystical sense of place, and his affection for all his characters (not least a visiting and highly convivial Russian sea captain), plays into his low-key, quirky humour. This isn’t a film of loud laughter, but of near-continuous quiet smiles. **PK**

BRINGING UP BABY 1938

A cat-alogue of cat-astrophes...

37 For an actress with such a distinguished career, it must have been galling for Katharine Hepburn that one of her most memorable screen moments involves her knickers being exposed by an accidental dress-tear. For many filmgoers, though, the scatty heiress she plays in Howard Hawks’ vintage screwball will always be the quintessential Kate: a force of nature who, in disrupting the life of Cary Grant’s meek paleontologist, inadvertently set the template for the archetype we now call the manic pixie dream girl. Watching them whip up a tornado of confusion with a tame leopard and a missing dino bone remains an undimmed pleasure, and an influential one too: Christopher Reeve, for example, based his entire Clark Kent performance in the *Superman* movies on Grant’s David Huxley. **NS**



DISASTER MOVIE
Ted tries to reel in Mary during a calamitous day out together.

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY 1998

Where the humour really gels...

38 The ‘bad-taste comedy’ cycle of the Farrelly brothers (*Dumb And Dumber*, *Shallow Hal*) hit its peak with this tale of sadsack Ted Strohmann (Ben Stiller) and his

hopeless 13-year crush on his gorgeous prom date Mary (Cameron Diaz). The moment when Ted, all geared up for the prom, gets his penis agonisingly caught in his zip gives fair notice of the subtleties to come – only exceeded by the notorious scene where Mary (Diaz gamely spoofing her own groomed image)

mistakes a blob of cum for hair gel. Factor in some serious dog-mishandling (think tranquilliser and emergency resuscitation), Matt Dillon as a deliciously sleazy PI, and a blind boy’s decapitated parakeet, and you can see why Roger Ebert enthused: “There’s such freedom in laughing so loudly. I feel cleansed.” **PK**

TO INFINITY...

Buzz, Woody and pals
soar high in Pixar's
first theatrical film.



TOY STORY 1995

Fresh out of the box...

39 Genuinely worthy of the term 'game-changer', Pixar's first movie marked the dawn of feature-length computer animation. But unlike, say, *Becky Sharp* (three-strip colour), *The Jazz Singer* (synchronised dialogue) or *The Robe* (enormous screen), this is a case of: come for the technical innovation, stay for the gags. Not that you'd know it from the effortless end result, but John Lasseter's anthropomorphic buddy-com went through multiple early drafts, including one where Woody brands rival-cum-BFF Buzz Lightyear "a little marital aid". The final film still has loads for the grown-ups: a deep seam of knowing humour that riffs on consumer culture without allowing any cynicism to mar the beginnings of a beautiful friendship – one that's endured through exceptional sequels and several shorts. Why? Because to quote evil Sid, "The toys are alive!" **ML**

IN BRUGES 2008**For whom the Belgium tolls.**

40 Playwright Martin McDonagh's feature debut about Irish hitmen in Belgian exile is one of the 21st century's most original introductions. As world-weary Ken (Brendan Gleeson) chaperones buffoonish newbie Ray (a career-best Colin Farrell) after a tragic mishap, the blend of blarney and bloodletting resembles *Father Ted* reimagined by Tarantino. The plot gleefully subverts tourist-movie clichés, veering away from guidebook attractions into debauched nights with “two manky hookers and a racist dwarf.” While no taboo is left unscathed in McDonagh's profane, PC-bashing dialogue, there's room for a tragic undertow in the film's study of repentance and redemption, beautifully played by the stars. The biggest revelation, though, is Ralph Fiennes, whose spittle-flecked invective as mob boss Harry foreshadowed the unexpected comic prowess he's brought to Wes Anderson and the Coens. **SK**

**AMERICAN PIE 1999****Pastry-OTT games.**

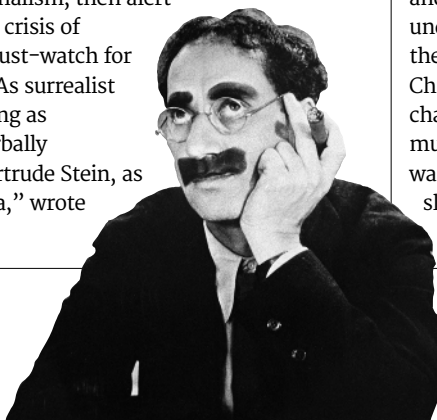
41 Pitched by screenwriter Adam Herz, rather unpromisingly, as “Untitled Teenage Sex Comedy That Can Be Made For Under \$10 Million...”, the Weitz brothers' *Porky's* update has a core of sweetness behind the spunk-drinking, MILF-hunting and dessert-humping. Jason Biggs is the likeable dork who, along with his classmates, makes a pact to pop his cherry by prom – although it's a rather more forbidden fruit that makes for his most memorable coupling, and the boys have much to learn. With a cast of inveterate scene-stealers – from Jim's well-meaning dad (Eugene Levy) and sex-pest Stifler (Seann William Scott) to flute-toting nerd Michelle (Alyson Hannigan) and robo-braggart The Shermanator (Chris Owen) – it nails the comedy and the cruelty of school, albeit one you'd actually want to go to. **MG**

**GOOD MORNING, VIETNAM 1987****Rocking from the Delta to the DMZ...**

42 The vast majority of Robin Williams' movies struggled to contain his madcap energy and quick-fire improvisations. Barry Levinson's film, in contrast, gave him free rein to let rip, confident perhaps that even his most unhinged flight of fancy could never top the insanity of the conflict into which his character finds himself plunged. The result remains Williams' most complete on-screen performance: a relentless barrage of impersonations, pop culture references, satire and insults, delivered at such breakneck speed it takes more than one viewing to take it all in. Williams, alas, is not the only lost comedic talent to be found here. The late Bruno Kirby is also sublime as the uptight pen-pusher whose idea of funny is to adopt an appalling French accent. **NS**

DUCK SOUP 1933**Top Marx.**

43 Before MGM signed the Marx Brothers and insisted on plots and romances to trammel their anarchic brilliance, Groucho, Harpo, Chico and Zeppo gifted Paramount with five scintillating comedies fizzing with visual and verbal wit. *Duck Soup*, their fifth and best, sees Groucho's Rufus T. Firefly lead the small state of Freedonia into conflict with neighbours Sylvania. Most fondly remembered for the mirror scene in which Harpo pretends to be Groucho's reflection, *Duck Soup* is a scattergun assault on the folly of war and the inanity of American triumphalism, then alert to the impending crisis of Nazism, now a must-watch for Donald Trump. “As surrealist as Dali, as shocking as Stravinsky, as verbally outrageous as Gertrude Stein, as alienated as Kafka,” wrote Roger Ebert. **JG**

**TRADING PLACES 1983****Murphy's law.**

44 Fresh from *An American Werewolf In London*, director John Landis delivered what remains one of the most enduring comedies of the '80s – a stock-market satire and one of the best Christmas movies ever made as Eddie Murphy's hustler and Dan Aykroyd's broker unwittingly see their lives swapped by two fat-cat brothers placing a \$1 bet on their nature versus nurture experiment. Like a modern-day take on Mark Twain's *The Prince And The Pauper*, the result is an eminently quotable R-rated gem with a script full of top-level swearing (“I'll rip out your eyes and piss on your brain”), comedy disguises and bizarre pay-offs (the randy gorilla, anyone?). Curiously, in 2010, as part of a Wall Street reform act, it became illegal to use non-public information in the commodities market – something that became known as “the Eddie Murphy Rule”. **JM**

**HEATHERS 1988****Winona forever.**

45 Originally intended by screenwriter Daniel Waters as a vehicle for Stanley Kubrick (the opening cafeteria scene is an homage to *Full Metal Jacket*), *Heathers* took a grenade to the rose-tinted high-school movies of the '80s, crafting a bitter black comedy about teenage suicide and the totalitarian rule of three teenage girls all called Heather. “Dan and I wanted to make the anti-Hughes movie,” said director Michael Lehmann and they nailed it. The cast is perfect. Winona Ryder cites Veronica Sawyer as her favourite role and you can see why – stylish, pithy, an underdog heroine, Ryder was just 16 at the time and the part made her. And Christian Slater has never been better, channelling Jack Nicholson for his murderous bad boy J.D., a role Brad Pitt was rejected for being ‘too nice’. It slumped at the box office but the critics loved it. **PA**

FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL 1994

In the words of David Cassidy...

46 Hugh Grant is always the best man and hardly ever the groom in Mike Newell's comedy of manners, a witty chronicle of class-based awkwardness and social embarrassment that sees Grant's diffident bachelor fall for Andie MacDowell's American interloper against a deftly observed backdrop of matches, despatches and calamitous speeches. Had Grant not used a recording of his own best man speech at his brother's nuptials as an audition piece, though, it is entirely possible Alan Rickman might have scooped his career-making role – just one intriguing might-have-been in a project that only landed MacDowell after Marisa Tomei and Jeanne Tripplehorn turned her character down. We can only wonder how they might have fared with “Is it still raining? I hadn't noticed.” **NS**



ELF 2003

Buddy comedy.

47 *Elf* is probably the most recent film to become essential Christmas viewing. Post 9/11, director Jon Favreau set out to make a cynicism-free festive fancy celebrating New York in all its glory. “Our goal was, ‘if we do this right, it’s going to be on TV every year,’” Fav said *TF*. So perfect is Will Ferrell as Buddy, a human raised as an elf in the North Pole who travels to NYC to find his biological father, it’s hard to believe the project started with Jim Carrey attached. His ever-cheery manchild is offset nicely by Zooey Deschanel’s snarky shop assistant and James Caan’s grinchy dad. So beloved it causes a Twitterstorm any year it’s not shown on terrestrial telly, *Elf* more than stands up to annual revisits. Jolly feelings guaranteed. **MM**

GAME NIGHT 2015

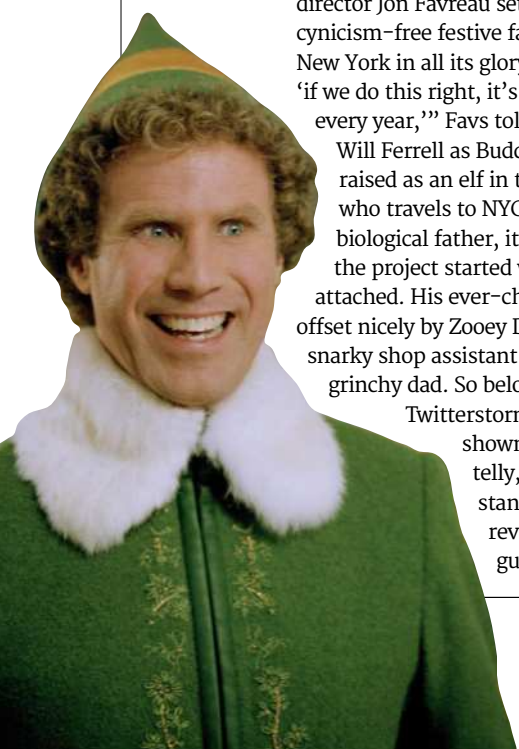
Rules of engagement.

48 The waning fortunes of the mid-budget movie at the box office hit no genre harder than comedy, which is why a film like *Game Night* feels like such a rare treat. Helmed by director duo John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein (who made the unexpectedly great *Vacation* reboot) it stars Jason Bateman and Rachel McAdams as a married couple in a funk, whose regular game night with their friends turns dangerously real when one of the players is seemingly kidnapped. Caught up in a complicated crime ring involving Fabergé eggs, Witsec lists and mob bosses with names like ‘The Bulgarian’, the line between real life and the game is always in question. Bateman and McAdams make a winning double act, but Jesse Plemons steals every scene he’s in as the couple’s deeply weird neighbour, while Daley and Goldstein bring visual panache to a terrifically tense egg hunt. **JF**

MIDNIGHT RUN 1988

The odd couple.

49 Missing out on *Big* to Tom Hanks was a blessing in disguise for Robert De Niro, who got the comedy role he was after in Martin Brest’s road trip caper without moving too far away from his tough guy image. Indeed, it’s the deconstruction of that image that provides many of the laughs here. De Niro’s mounting exasperation at the antics of his bail-jumping, travelling partner Charles Grodin enable him to gently parody his reputation for taciturn machismo and powder-keg volatility. His co-star’s measured underplaying is no less delightful in a lively romp whose other pleasures include Yaphet Kotto as a testy FBI Agent, Joe Pantoliano as a sleazeball bondsman and Dennis Farina as the ultimate Las Vegas mobster. Not for nothing does Doug Liman regard this as “the Holy Bible of love story and character dynamics.” **NS**





DR. STRANGELOVE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB 1964

The world's end.

50 Long before *Team America* made US warmongering lethally funny, Stanley Kubrick's bombcom saw comedy in the Cold War. His and writer Terry Southern's riff on Peter George's novel *Red Alert* started out seriously, until Kubrick smelt the absurdity of a situation in which America's nuclear stockpile couldn't be used unless someone went crackers... Enter Sterling Hayden's deranged General Ripper, the commie hater who does "a silly thing". The comic divide between political understatement and apocalyptic reality is deliciously milked by Peter Sellers, tackling three roles with uproarious virtuosity. Factor in George C. Scott's mad-eyed General Turgidson and you've got satire with a serious kick: a pratfall payload that makes you feel lucky to be alive. Literally. **KH**

SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK 2012

Looking on the bright side.

51 Famous bust-ups aside, David O. Russell clearly has a way with actors. *Silver Linings Playbook* was the first film in 30 years to be nominated for all four acting Oscars (a trick Russell would repeat with *American Hustle*). Jennifer Lawrence (replacing a departing Anne Hathaway) was the only actor to take home an Oscar as Tiffany, a widow who enters a dance competition with Bradley Cooper's Pat, a former teacher with bipolar disorder who returns from a mental-health facility to live with his parents. What sounds trite on the page is rendered invigorating on screen, thanks to committed performances and Russell's deconstruction of romcomdram tropes. Despite the serious subject matter, it's not above a winning, grin-inducing, punch-the-air finale and it delivered well above expectations at the box office, picking up \$236m worldwide. **MM**

GHOSTBUSTERS 1984

A favourite old haunt.

52 The word 'iconic' gets thrown around with reckless abandon, but *Ghostbusters* earns that adjective several times over. The logo. The theme song. The proton packs. The car. Stay-Puft. Its pop-culture footprint is inestimable. Perhaps one of the reasons it's so fondly remembered is for its every-guy heroes with their smart-mouthed (largely ad-libbed) dialogue and questionable methods. Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and Ernie Hudson are the spook-smashing quartet, but at various stages of pre-production the cast could've looked very different: Aykroyd's *Blues Brother* John Belushi was earmarked for a role before his death and John Candy was cast as Louis Tully before dropping out to be replaced by Rick Moranis. Eddie Murphy was the first choice for Winston, but he opted to do *Beverly Hills Cop* instead. **MM**



WHO YA GONNA CALL?

Harold Ramis, Ernie Hudson, Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd team up to battle ghouls and ghosts.

MEAN GIRLS 2004

Girls against girls.

53 Back when Lindsay Lohan was adorable, *Mean Girls* was her crowning glory. As new girl Cady Heron, taking on A-group the 'Plastics' lead by Queen Bee Regina George (Rachel McAdams), she was the likeable access point to a movie examining the complex self-constructed social classes in girl-group dynamics. That *Mean Girls* is so on the nose probably comes from the fact that it's adapted not from fiction but a self-help book *Queen Bees And Wannabes* by Rosalind Wiseman, aimed at aiding parents of teenage girls in negotiating the nightmare years of female adolescence. Tina Fey's biting screenplay – developed with *Saturday Night Live* producer Lorne Michaels and directed by *Freaky Friday*'s Mark Waters – is hilarious, excruciating and poignant – if you don't have to live it. As Fey says, "Adults find it funny... Young people watch it like a reality show." **PA**



SO FETCH
Lindsay Lohan plans to take down the Plastics from the inside.

BEVERLY HILLS COP 1984

The laughing policeman.

54 Thanks to *SNL*, *48 Hrs.* and *Trading Places*, Eddie Murphy was already a star – but this sent him through the stratosphere. Stepping in last second for Stallone, Murphy motormouths his way through an Oscar-nominated script that sees his Detroit detective stirring it up Beverly Hills style. Classic fish-out-of-water stuff, though it's a different f-word that dominates proceedings; Murphy's talent for swearing is matched only by his gift for mimicry.

Where the '87 sequel was too callous and '94's part three too tame, this gets the bullets/belly laughs balance bang on. Here's hoping Murphy can recapture the old magic in the long-rumoured *BHC4*; either way, Alex Foley will remain his greatest character: resourceful, irrepressible, high-decibel. **ML**

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT 1988

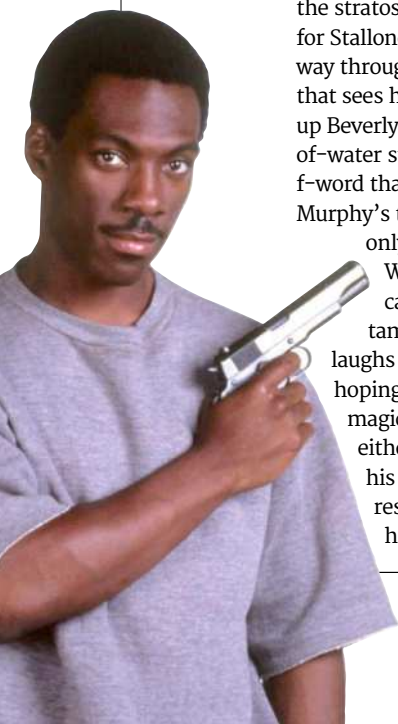
They're playing our toon.

55 "A deplorable development in the possibilities of animation," grumbled critic Dilys Powell. Well, we all have our off-days. Most audiences, then and since, have revelled in the flawless integration of live-action (Bob Hoskins as private eye Eddie Valiant) and animation (the denizens of Toontown, including the titular frenetic bunny). Set in 1947 film-noir LA, Robert Zemeckis' tour de force allows us to savour the rarely seen Duck Duo (Donald and Daffy duetting on pianos), the overripe villainy of toon-hating Judge Doom (Christopher Lloyd), the curvy sensuality of Jessica Rabbit, voiced by Kathleen Turner ("I'm not really bad – I'm just drawn that way") and the expertise of some classic voice-artists: Mae Questel as Betty Boop, Mel Blanc as almost everybody else. Animation director Richard Williams reaped an Oscar – richly deserved. **PK**

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT 1934

When Peter met Ellie...

56 Before his name became an adjective (Capra-corn), Frank Capra laid down a graceful, fizzing template for romcoms. Its against-the-odds success story is, in itself, purely Capraesque. Few people wanted to make the Depression-era tale of working-class reporter Peter and on-the-lam posho Ellie's shared cross-country road trip, but Claudette Colbert hoicked up her fee, MGM loaned Clark Gable and, after their initial doubts, both brought something special. Between the champagne-sparkling comic set-pieces and moonlit-stream romanticism, repeat audience viewings boosted its slow opening takes. "The people discovered that movie," Capra claimed. And we've been rediscovering it ever since: whenever some Harry meets some Sally, Capra's deliciously flighty dance of slow-sparking chemistry is never far away. **KH**



AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY 1997

Yeah... baby!

57 Originally conceived as the frontman for his post-*Saturday Night Live* band Ming Tea, Mike Myers' shagadelic '60s spy Austin Powers was granted his own feature outing in this 1997 beauty directed by Jay Roach – a charming, vibrant spin on Swinging London and Sean Connery-era Bond. With Myers doubling up as Powers' Blofeld-like enemy Dr. Evil (a role originally offered to Jim Carrey), the parody is pitch-perfect – cultures clashing as Austin and his baldly nemesis arrive in the present-day after being cryogenically frozen for 30 years. Featuring one of Will Ferrell's earliest movie roles as Dr. Evil's luckless henchman Mustafa, the gags aren't always sophisticated (one female opponent is called Alotta Fagina). But from the very opening, as Austin marches down a London street to the sound of Quincy Jones' 'Soul Bossa Nova', it's deliciously playful. **JM**

GROOVY GUY

Austin 'Danger' Powers gets up to some '60s-inspired spy work.



SOAP STAR

Dustin Hoffman plays
Southwest General's
Dorothy Michaels.



TOOTSIE 1982

Working girl.

58 A decade before Robin Williams became a Scottish housekeeper in *Mrs Doubtfire*, Dustin Hoffman donned spanx, specs and a sheer blouse as Michael Dorsey, a tempestuous actor who transforms himself into a woman to get work on a soap opera. It's hard to imagine the likes of Michael Caine and Peter Sellers – both considered for the role – committing in quite the way Hoffman did. He visited the set of soap *General Hospital*, underwent numerous gruelling make-up tests (which had him in tears because he wasn't "beautiful enough") and watched *La Cage Aux Folles* on a loop as research. The hard work paid off, though he lost out on the Best Actor Oscar to Ben Kingsley (for *Ghandi*). In any other year, he'd have taken it home, and rightly so. **JW**



THE BIG LEBOWSKI 1998

The Dude abides.

59 A critical and commercial flop on release, the Coen brothers' seventh outing has gone on to redefine the phrase 'cult movie'. An annual Lebowski Fest now exists, with fans dressing up as Jeff Bridges' amateur bowler-cum-sleuth The Dude who becomes embroiled in a pot-hazed hunt for a missing girl. Like Robert Altman's take on Raymond Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*, it's a dreamy slice of LA counterculture – from Julianne Moore's "vaginal artist" to Kraftwerk-esque German nihilists and a Heffner-like porn baron – all wrapped-up inside an offbeat narrative as shambling as *The Dude*. Mix in an awesome T Bone Burnett-curated soundtrack, lines of dialogue like "We'll cut off your Johnson!" and John Turturro as a Lycra-clad pederast, and *The Big Lebowski* remains one of the Coens' most satisfying comedies. The sort that gets better with every viewing. **JM**

SOUTH PARK: BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT 1999

Blame Canada!

60 Begun in January 1998, when Trey Parker and Matt Stone's cartoon *South Park* was still in its first season, *Bigger, Longer & Uncut* remains the only movie-length outing to date for Stan, Kyle, Kenny and Cartman. If the show's two-dimensional animation has since become more sophisticated, this was the perfect early example of Parker and Stone's savvy mindset – riffing on the controversy around the show and the dangers of censorship as the kids start incessantly swearing after seeing Terrance and Phillip's latest movie. Flush with magnificent Broadway-style musical numbers, the film grossed \$83 million worldwide. Will there ever be a sequel? Maybe not. As the creators noted in 2008, "The first *South Park* movie was so potent, we're all still recovering from the blow." **JM**

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS 1949**Mine's a Guinness – or eight.**

61 Despite its cosy reputation, Ealing Studios proved its dark heart with Robert Hamer's brave black comedy in which vengeful Louis Mazzini (Dennis Price) plans to bump off the eight members of the D'Ascoyne family who stand between him and the Dukedom he regards as his birthright. It's a harsh, still pertinent dissection of class envy and murderous manners in English society, but the bromide is masked by the plot's elegant ironies and the exquisite literary poise of cinema's wittiest voiceover. The film's status, though, owes to a legendary casting coup. In an inspired touch, Alec Guinness stars as all eight victims, regardless of age or sex. It's a masterclass in creating convincing individuals through variations in rhythm, posture and tone – but, being forged from the in-bred D'Ascoyne mould, not *too* individual. **SK**

CLERKS 1994**Counter culture.**

62 When Kevin Smith watched Richard Linklater's 1991 film *Slacker* while working at a convenience store he had an epiphany: "So you can make a movie about anything, apparently." Smith's first instinct was to write what he knew – a movie based loosely on his own life, which he shot in the same Quick Stop where he spent his days working, filling the cast with friends and family and maxing out 10 credit cards to finance the \$27,575 production. The results were electric and reinvented comedy in the early '90s. Gone were the elaborate high concepts and casts of *Saturday Night Live* alums, in their place scuzzy sets and casts of nobodies who jabber about pop culture and sex in outrageously explicit fashion. Sure, it's rough around the edges, but it just adds to *Clerks*' low-rent charm. **JF**

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY 1940**Wedded bliss.**

63 Katharine Hepburn was considered box-office poison when she took on this adap of Phil Barry's Broadway play (which she'd starred in), buying the rights and then selling them to MGM's Louis B. Mayer for just \$250,000 in return for having veto rights over producer, director, writer and co-stars. She chose brilliantly: George Cukor's direction is fizzy and feather-light, while male leads Cary Grant and James Stewart dazzle, the former playing the ex-husband of Hepburn's socialite Tracy Lord, the latter a reporter sent to cover her second marriage. An impossibly elegant and delicately erotic prattle of the sexes ensues, its wit sparkling like champagne. *High Society*, the 1956 musical remake, is also a treat, but *The Philadelphia Story* is in a class of its own. **JG**

**MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN 1979****Just a very naughty boy...**

64 Hard now to credit the shrieks of outrage sparked by the Python team's spirited spoof of Biblical epics – denounced by editorials and religious authorities,

banned in Ireland, Norway and (oh yes) Guildford. The saga of Brian Cohen, born at the same moment as Jesus and mistaken for the Messiah, it includes scads of the Pythons' best remembered routines: "What have the Romans ever done for us?", Pontius Pilate's "gweat fwiend in Wome called Biggus Dickus", the

mis-heard Sermon on the Mount ("Blessed are the cheese-makers?") – and the crucified singing 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life'. Partly shot in Tunisia on sets left over from Zeffirelli's *Jesus Of Nazareth*, it scored a worldwide smash-hit despite the protests of the pious. "Nuns with banners!" marvelled Michael Palin. **PK**

THE WOMANS
Monty Python's
mistaken messiah
gets into a spot of
bother in Wome.

LA RÈGLE DU JEU 1939

Game on.

65 Number four in *Sight And Sound*'s 2012 poll of the Greatest Films Of All Time, this masterpiece of social-comedy was scorned by critics and public alike upon release, leading director Jean Renoir to cut it from 113 minutes to 85. No matter; the film flopped, and was then banned by the wartime French government for being "too demoralising". Reconstructed and critically rediscovered at the Venice Film Festival in 1956 its reputation has only grown since, the giddy mix of comedy and tragedy, melodrama and farce proving as dazzlingly fluent as the mobile, deep-focus photography. *La Règle Du Jeu* (*The Rules Of The Game*) is, essentially, an upstairs-downstairs tale with a party at a country retreat uncorking all manner of (mis)behaviour. Renoir never judges – "Everyone has their reasons" is the famous line – but there's anger beneath the civility and compassion. **JG**



WHEN HARRY MET SALLY... 1989

Yes, yes, YES!

66 Rob Reiner directed *When Harry Met Sally...* in the middle of an unparalleled hot streak that saw him nailing every genre he turned his hand to (*This Is Spinal Tap*, *The Princess Bride*, *Misery*). Number six in the AFI's greatest romcoms list, *WHMS...* remains a yardstick for the genre, its acute relationship insights buoyed by the chemistry between Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan. The characters of Harry and Sally are loosely inspired by Reiner (who was depressed, post-divorce, at the time) and screenwriter Nora Ephron (whose fussy eating habits Sally picked up). Charting a relationship over a number of years – and addressing the age old 'can men and women ever just be friends?' question – the film's never short on belly laughs, not least in the notorious "I'll have what she's having" delicatessen scene. **MM**



BIG 1988

A film with heart and soul...

67 Tom Hanks gives such a charming and believable performance as Josh, the boy who wakes up in the body of a man, that it's tough to fathom how Harrison Ford, Robert De Niro and John Travolta were pegged for the part before his casting. Could it be that Fox felt a thespian was needed to achieve the transformation? If so, they overlooked the *Splash* star's hitherto untapped physicality, Hanks giving his man/boy a loping gait and youthful elasticity that makes us instantly buy the film's central fantastical conceit. From the 'walking piano' interlude at FAO Schwarz to Elizabeth Perkins' liberating bounce on Josh's trampoline, Penny Marshall's film delivers one enchanting sequence after another before ending on a note of poignant melancholia. Ice cream, soda pop, vanilla on the top. **NS**

THE LEGO MOVIE 2014

Toy story.

68 A movie inspired by a Danish toy line aimed at ages 6-14? In less capable hands, *The LEGO Movie* might have been as inspiring as an assembly instruction booklet, but writer/directors Phil Lord and Christopher Miller (*Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs*) are made of zanier stuff. Despite admitting to initial scepticism about a LEGO movie, their take is brilliantly batshit, set in a world where conformity reigns – until construction worker Emmet (voiced by Chris Pratt) leads a mission against the corrupt Lord Business (voiced by Will Ferrell). Part fantasy epic, part buddy comedy, *The LEGO Movie* celebrates creativity with wild bursts of imagination, plus some fantastic cameos (a scene-stealing Batman got his own LEGO movie in 2017) and a formula-busting final act that grounds the bedlam with considerable pathos. Masterful. **JW**

INSIDE OUT 2015

To prepuberty and beyond...

69 Accused of sequelitis and Disneyfication, Pixar bounced back with one of its freshest and funniest bouts of emocomic world-building. Director Pete Docter brainsplices his youthful memories with his daughter's growing pains for the tale of 11-year-old Riley's aching goodbye to Minnesota and childhood. With Sadness, Joy, Anger, Fear and Disgust jostling for the wheel, the result is a deliriously funny, psychedelic, rollercoaster weepie like no other. Who else could combine an imaginary childhood friend's death with killer gags about *Vertigo* posters, broccoli pizza, abstract thought and the young male's brainstate of emotionally stunted perma-panic? At a time of quick-fix kids' flicks, Pixar's ingeniously witty tearjerker is definitely one for the memory banks. **KH**



BLAZING SADDLES 1974

You'll laugh yourself horse...

70 A spirited western satire from mickey-taking specialist Mel Brooks that sees his regular collaborators (Gene Wilder, Harvey Korman, Madeline Kahn et al) bringing their goofy energy to a frontier town outraged to find their new sheriff is... not Richard Pryor. Yes, the comedian's persona was considered too edgy for him to be cast, paving the way for Cleavon Little to play 'Black Bart' (the film's original title) in a comedy that pointedly addresses the invisibility of blacks, Jews and other minorities in the generic Hollywood oater. (Another mooted title, indeed, was *Tex X*.) Nowadays, of course, the only thing anybody remembers about *Blazing Saddles* is Mongo (Alex Karras) punching a horse and the wind-breaking campfire scene – just one example, says Brooks, of his work "breaking the fourth wall and telling the truth". **NS**

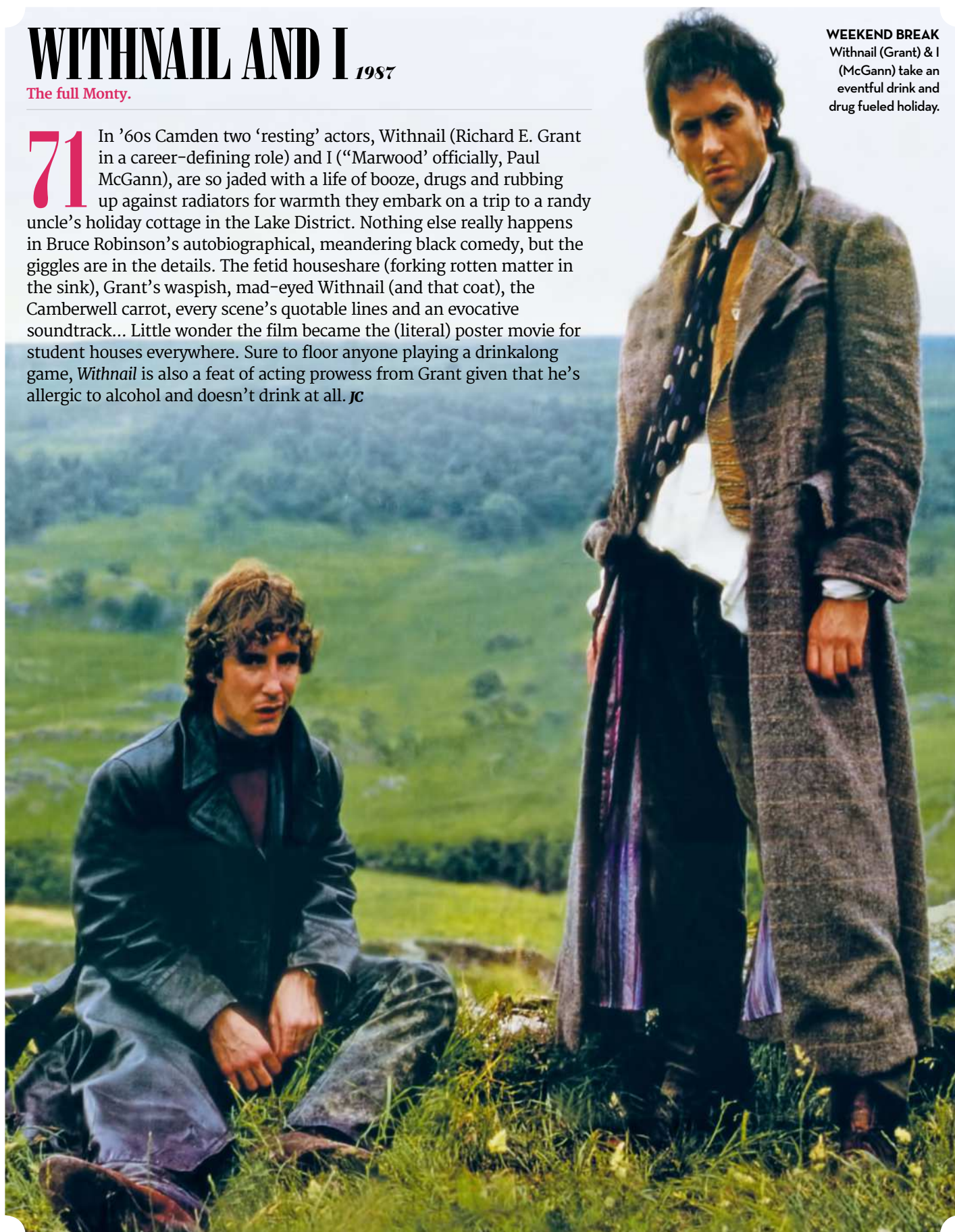


WITHNAIL AND I 1987

The full Monty.

71 In '60s Camden two 'resting' actors, Withnail (Richard E. Grant in a career-defining role) and I ("Marwood" officially, Paul McGann), are so jaded with a life of booze, drugs and rubbing up against radiators for warmth they embark on a trip to a randy uncle's holiday cottage in the Lake District. Nothing else really happens in Bruce Robinson's autobiographical, meandering black comedy, but the giggles are in the details. The fetid houseshare (forking rotten matter in the sink), Grant's waspish, mad-eyed Withnail (and that coat), the Camberwell carrot, every scene's quotable lines and an evocative soundtrack... Little wonder the film became the (literal) poster movie for student houses everywhere. Sure to floor anyone playing a drinkalong game, *Withnail* is also a feat of acting prowess from Grant given that he's allergic to alcohol and doesn't drink at all. **JC**

WEEKEND BREAK
Withnail (Grant) & I (McGann) take an eventful drink and drug fueled holiday.





SWOT TEAM
Best friends Molly and Amy embark on a night out to remember.

BOOKSMART 2019

After-school special.

72 Olivia Wilde's coming-of-ager flips the typical high-school comedy formula on its head. Instead of slackers and stoners, Amy (Kaitlyn Dever) and Molly (Beanie Feldstein) are over-achievers who got into great colleges and never stepped out of line. But therein lies the problem – they forgot to have *fun*. During their odyssey into the night to reclaim their lost youth, Amy and Molly catch an exceedingly awkward ride with their taxi-driving principal (Jason Sudeikis), get high on strawberries laced with hallucinogens by scene-stealer Gigi (Billie Lourde), identify a serial killer and pursue their crushes to a classmate's graduation party. Funny and heartfelt, it's an intelligent, accomplished update of the *Superbad* template, and in Amy and Molly has one of the warmest film friendships in years. **JF**



MONSTERS, INC. 2001

Pixar perfect.

73 “Hey, let’s do a film about monsters,” director Pete Docter said during a *Toy Story* production meeting in 1994. Seven years later, he’d completed his directorial debut with this 2001 insta-classic, Pixar’s fourth-highest-grossing movie and one of the studio’s finest buddy flicks. Based in parallel universe Monstropolis, it sees professional scarers James P. ‘Sulley’ Sullivan (John Goodman) and Mike Wazowski (Billy Crystal) befriend a human child while stumbling across a corporate conspiracy. There are in-jokes and sight gags galore (Harryhausen’s sushi restaurant, an appearance by the Pizza Planet van from *Toy Story*), and the door-busting finale remains a creative high point for a studio that’s never been short on inspiration. Many of the characters returned in 2013 prequel *Monsters University*, which more than lived up to its high-flying predecessor. **JW**

GALAXY QUEST 1999

In space, everyone can hear you laugh.

74 “No one laughed louder or longer in the cinema than I did,” exclaimed Patrick Stewart after seeing *Galaxy Quest*. William Shatner, George Takei and Wil Wheaton joined in the hearty chorus of approvals for Dean Parisot’s spot on *Star Trek* spoof, which sends up the show with infinite affection. Tim Allen (cast after Alec Baldwin, Steve Martin and Kevin Kline passed) is Jason Nesmith, the Shatner stand-in recruited by aliens to lead an intergalactic battle. As in the best *Trek* there’s strength in numbers with the superb ensemble – Sigourney Weaver plays delightfully against type, Sam Rockwell is hysterical as expendable redshirt Guy and Alan Rickman brought immeasurable pathos to Shakespearean thesp turned pseudo-Spock, Alexander Dane. An earlier cut of the film was much darker, but revisions turned it into a broad, crowd-pleasing adventure in its own right. **MM**

THE PRODUCERS 1967

Springtime for Mel Brooks...

75 So brazenly tasteless was the subject-matter that no major studio would touch it. But with his debut directorial effort (at age 42) Mel Brooks struck gold. A gleefully raucous satire on American showbiz, *The Producers* features Zero Mostel as Max Bialystock, a fraudulent Broadway producer, and Gene Wilder as his accountant Leo Bloom, who conspire to produce the sure-fire flop of all time, which they can oversell to their investors: an inane musical about the rise of Adolf Hitler. They hire a famously inept director, a woefully unsuitable actor for the lead and confidently wait for it to close on the first night. But hailed as a satirical masterpiece, the show's a huge hit. The title number 'Springtime For Hitler', complete with tap-dancing Nazis, is unforgettable. "One of the funniest movies ever made," raved Roger Ebert. **PK**

THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL 2014

Fiennes work.

76 There is a cake at the heart of Wes Anderson's deliciously mad-cap comedy – the courtesan au chocolat – that is lovingly detailed in its precise ingredients, composition and build. Delicate, quirky and multi-layered, it's the creation of a master baker that brings pure joy to those who ingest it... You know where we're going with this... Anderson's time-hopping history of a central Europe hotel focuses on stolen art (and kisses) perpetrated by concierge M. Gustave (Ralph Fiennes) and takes in jailbreaks, fascism, hitmen, vintage wines and literal cliffhangers – augmented by Oscar-winning production design, whimsical miniatures and ear-worm music. Anderson idiosyncratic, of course – but the cherry on top is Fiennes' revelatory turn that makes potty-mouthing adroitly funny and recalls the physical comedy of Buster Keaton. **JC**

BULL DURHAM 1988

Costner hits it out the park.

77 Having knocked around the minor leagues himself, writer/director Ron Shelton brings great authenticity to *Bull Durham*, a baseball dramedy in which veteran catcher Crash Davis (Kevin Costner) is brought in to teach hot-head rookie 'Nuke' (Tim Robbins) some maturity – in life as in his game. Complicating matters is Annie Savoy (Susan Sarandon), a baseball groupie who every year picks one rising star to be her man. This year it's Nuke (who, we're informed, "fucks like he pitches; sorta all over the place"), but Crash has an easy, irresistible charm... A good deal more gritty and witty than 99 per cent of today's romcoms, *Bull Durham* was a surprise hit, encouraging Costner to return to sports movies with *Field Of Dreams* (1989), *Tin Cup* (1996, and again with Shelton), *For Love Of The Game* (1999), *Draft Day* (2014) and *McFarland* (2015). **JG**



STAY CLASSY
Will Ferrell and Christina Applegate compete for screen time.

ANCHORMAN: THE LEGEND OF RON BURGUNDY 2004

This just in.

78 The most quotable film of the 2000s (get your "I Love Lamp" T-shirts online) is, quite simply, the balls. Yet Adam McKay

and Will Ferrell's tale of 1970s newsreaders faced with – gasp – woman's lib in the form of feisty Christina Applegate was pitched 20 times before Dreamworks bit. The original script suggested John C. Reilly, Chris Parnell and Ben Stiller in place of David Koechner, Steve Carell and Paul Rudd, and an entire crime-

solving subplot was culled (but found its way on the straight-to-DVD *Wake Up, Ron Burgundy: The Lost Movie*). Luckily, with a never-droller Ferrell as the scotch-loving lunk, plus thick-and-fast cameos from Tim Robbins and Jack Black, comedy alchemy prevailed, resulting in the fratpack's finest, funniest hour. **MG**

BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY 2001

And so to Bedfordshire...

79 America had *Sex And The City* and the UK had Bridget Jones, and we got the better deal. Clumsy, swearsy, worried about her weight, her career, her love life and her daily intake of booze and fags, Jones was the every woman – fallible, loveable, relateable. Yet don't underestimate Bridge'. Based on Helen Fielding's novel, itself a take on *Pride And Prejudice*, this was a smart, modern romance directed by a woman (Sharon Maguire), which grabbed Oscar and BAFTA nods for Renée Zellweger, scored a sequel, a musical adap and a third film outing with *Bridget Jones's Baby*. When does that ever happen? That *BJD* actually manages to succeed with both the 'rom' – a love triangle between naughty Hugh Grant and steely Colin Firth – and the 'com' – giant pants, Mr Tits-Pervert – sealed the deal. **PA**

JUST AS YOU ARE
Bridget Jones wants to lose 20 lbs and find a nice, sensible boyfriend.



FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF 1986

Look Hughes talking.

80 Written in just six days by a filmmaker at the top of his class, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* is gleeful wish fulfilment in film form as truant teen-hero Ferris (Matthew Broderick) skips school and blazes a trail across Chicago. Easily writer/director John Hughes' most personal film (Ferris was named after Hughes' best friend, while his bedroom was modelled on the filmmaker's own teen den), Hughes' fourth time behind the viewfinder scraps the socio-comedy of his earlier films (*Pretty In Pink*, *The Breakfast Club*) for something broader, funnier and impossibly cool. Thirty years on, it remains a yardstick against which all teen films are measured; so joyful it still has the power to get you dancing during the iconic parade sequence. **JW**



SUPERBAD 2007

Teen dream.

81 If *Superbad* feels like it often effortlessly captures the awkward spasms of teendom, there's a reason: Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg wrote the script when they were 13. It was given a bit of a polish when Judd Apatow came on as producer, with Greg Mottola taking the reins of a film that's the lovechild of *Revenge Of The Nerds* and anything by John Hughes. Swearsy in the extreme (the F-word is uttered 1.6 times a minute), unflinching in its ickiness (that period dance scene) and ultimately an ode to the kind of friendship that lasts a lifetime (there's a reason the film's decoy title was 'Separation Anxiety') as high-school seniors Seth (Jonah Hill) and Evan (Michael Cera) spend a wild night trying to get to the party of cool chick Jules (Emma Stone) with the help of their friend Fogell, AKA McLovin (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), and his fake I.D. **JW**

HAROLD AND MAUDE 1971

Boy meets old girl...

82 Moviegoers were happily seduced by *The Graduate*'s May-December fling. But when Hal Ashby went a step further with this tale of a death-obsessed young man who hooks up – yes, in that sense – with a 79-year-old woman, it proved too taboo for the box office. Later, though, came cult status as audiences warmed to the movie's unique mix of pitch-black humour (Harold's fake suicides) and seize-the-day sentiment. The life lessons are dispensed with a twinkle by Ruth Gordon's Maude, but never a drop of treacle: nicking cars and scorning authority, she's more wily than winsome, while her delicately handled backstory – a quietly shocking glimpse of a concentration camp tattoo – gives the conformity-snubbing antics a profound underpinning. Modern masters of melan-comedy like Wes Anderson and Alexander Payne owe it a big debt. **ML**

**ZOOLANDER 2001**

Still hot right now.

83 On theatrical release many critics trashed Ben Stiller's conspiracy-com makeover of a character he sculpted for the '96 VH1 Fashion Awards. But *Zoolander* was made for a home-ents afterlife because the quips are dispatched with a dexterity that non-ambiturner Derek would give his last orange mocha frappuccino for – thus, like all great pun-packers, it blooms on repeat viewings. The satire is more silly than savage but deliberately, deliciously so. Stiller knew that anything more serious would succumb to the very celebrity-style pomposity he wanted to goose: “The fashion industry is no more ridiculous than the movie industry. One of the things they have in common is that people take themselves kind of seriously...” No risk of that here. *Zoolander* turns cheek-sucking superficiality into a kind of fine art of full-bore frivolity. **KH**

TEAM AMERICA: WORLD POLICE 2004

Strings attached.

84 At the height of post-9/11 paranoia, *South Park* creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone did the unthinkable: they turned terrorism into an excuse for a song and dance. Conservative groups like Move America Forward were up in arms, but everybody else was laughing too much at the antics of the titular security team to notice. “We wanted to deal with this emotion of being hated as an American,” Stone said later and, naturally, he and Parker did that in the funniest way possible – by creating epic scenes of destruction using an army of 270 marionettes, staging elaborate puppet sex skits and having all non-English-speaking characters gibber nonsense. The result is as controversial – and, yes, thigh-slappingly, wickedly hilarious – as anything the duo have ever cooked up. Altogether now: “America, fuck yeah!” **JW**

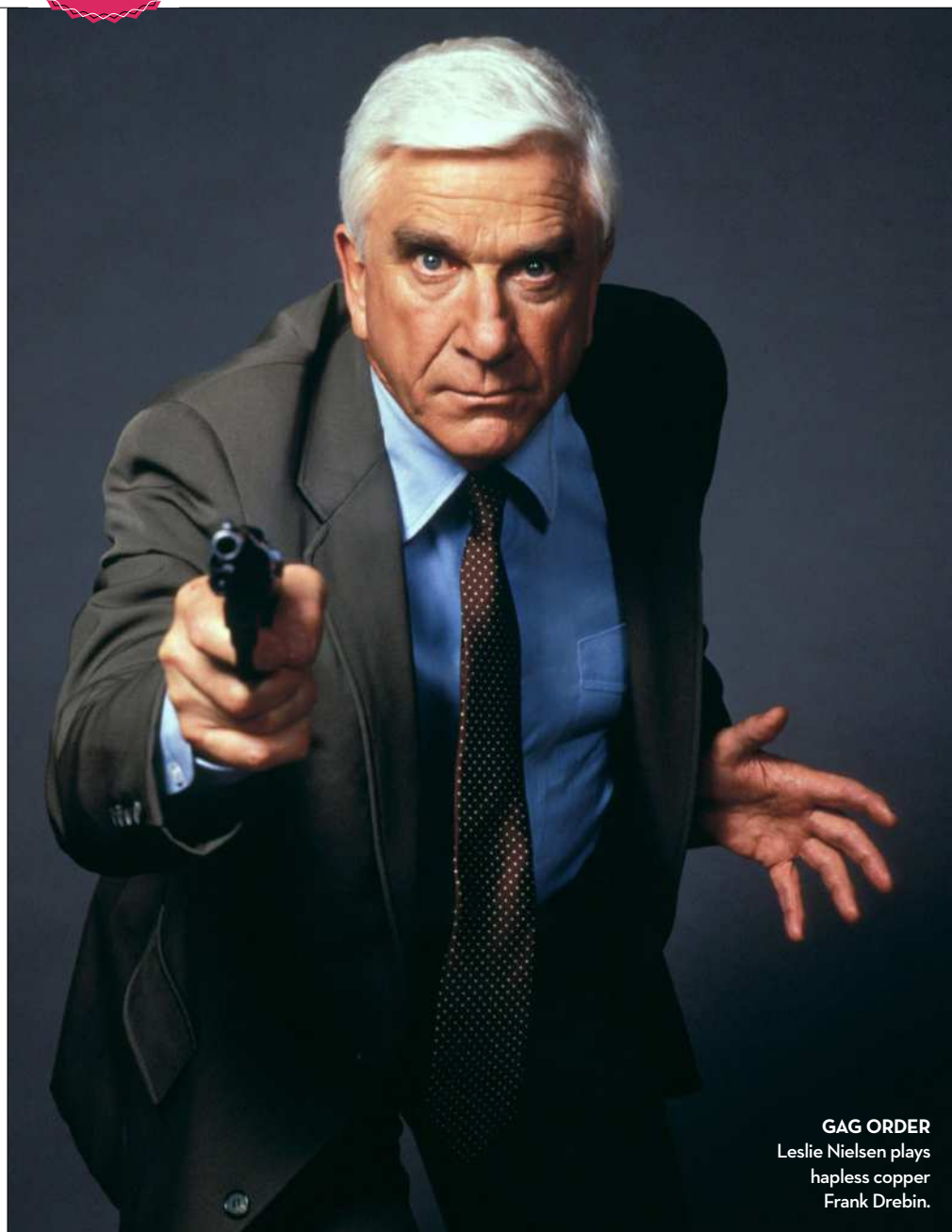
AIRPLANE! 1980

A flight to remember.

85 Taking off from the '70s disaster movie runway, Zucker-Abrahams-Zucker's zinger-flinger lobbed Kentucky-Fried cracks at speed, clearing the way for *Naked Gun* and other movie mockers to follow. Flops like 2008's *Disaster Movie* may have sullied spoof cinema's rep, but *Airplane!* is the mother of all mirth-splattering mischief-makers, its joyousness partly due to inspired restraint. “We want you to pretend that you don't know you're in a comedy,” Jerry Zucker told the cast, setting a perfectly pokerfaced pitch. Alongside broad skits on *Saturday Night Fever* and *Jaws*, some lines and names were lifted direct from 1957's inflight food-poisoning drama *Zero Hour!* Serious actors mischievously counter-cast included Peter Graves as a paedophile, while self-styled “closet comedian” Leslie Nielsen brought a fart machine to set and dropped deadpan one-liners with pungent drollery. Just don't call him... you know. **KH**



STAYIN' ALIVE
Ted (Robert Hays) shows Elaine (Julie Hagerty) some of his best moves.



GAG ORDER
Leslie Nielsen plays
hapless copper
Frank Drebin.

THE NAKED GUN 1988

Fair cop.

86 Based on the short-lived 1982 TV series *Police Squad!* and masterminded by *Airplane!* brain David Zucker, *The Naked Gun* unleashes a blitzkrieg of gags; from the *M Squad*-riffing opening credits (a police car zipping down rain-washed roads, into showers and over rollercoasters) to cop Frank Drebin's pathological inability to observe the bleeding obvious. Despite an A-grade cadre of support players (George Kennedy, Priscilla Presley, uh, O.J.), *The Naked Gun*'s coup de gras is transforming one-time dramatic actor Leslie Nielsen into a loveably hapless hero – a character with so much mileage he was more than welcome back for sequels 2½: *The Smell Of Fear* (1991) and 33 1/3: *The Final Insult* (1994). Retitled en route to cinemas, according to Zucker because it “promised so much more than it could possibly deliver”, what *The Naked Gun* does deliver is pure comedy gold. **JW**



FORREST GUMP 1994

History in the making.

87 Tom Hanks won his second Best Actor Oscar in two years (his first was for 1993 drama *Philadelphia*) playing Forrest Gump, a good ol' mother-lovin' Alabama boy with a low IQ and a big heart who somehow manages to impact every major event in US socio-political and cultural history from the 1950s to the 1980s. With its reactionary politics and sentimental championing of the American dream – to say nothing of a core concept pilfered from Woody Allen's *Zelig* – Robert Zemeckis' historical dramedy has its detractors. Go with it, though, and you have a cleverly written feel-good epic bursting with adventure, laughs, tears, baby-boomer hits and dazzling special effects. *Gump* took \$677m at the worldwide box office and won six Oscars including Best Film (in a year when *Pulp Fiction* and *The Shawshank Redemption* were competing). **JG**

OFFICE SPACE 1999

Occupational hazards.

88 Mike Judge's satire on corporate America is a rebel yell for anyone raging against the machine in a daily drudge of annoying colleagues, asinine company rules, brain-numbing tasks and faulty printers. Like many a cult comedy, *Office Space* didn't set the box office alight at release but found its audience via VHS, as McJobbers discovered and related to IT desk slave Peter (Ron Livingston) turning workplace renegade after a hypnotherapy session leaves him immune to office stress and responsibility. A precursor to *The Office* and *Horrible Bosses*, *Office Space* expertly mapped the petty peeves of cubicled life (missing staplers, pointless form-filling, the idiots in charge of 'restructures') and tapped a rich comic vein of a universally recognisable experience, whether blue or white collar. PC-load letter rage... funny 'cos it's true. **JC**

CLUELESS 1995**Totally buggin'**

89 So, you're probably all like, "The only classic '90s teen-com worth talking about was that one where Jason Biggs had a boink-fest with some pastry." As if! Amy Heckerling (*Look Who's Talking*) delivered this totally ragin' riff on a way-old book (Jane Austen's *Emma*), starring Alicia Silverstone as Cher, who's a total Betty and the least ensembly challenged heroine of all time. She learns "'tis a far, far better thing doing stuff for other people", making over poor Brittany Murphy, and falls for her ex-stepbrother, which is a bit "Ew!", but he is Paul Rudd, who remains a Baldwin to this day, so like, whatever. It also has way existential things to say about teen flicks, Valley Girl culture and how guys dress today. Satirical but sweet, so '90s but so fresh: what a piece of work, to quote Mel Gibson in *Hamlet*. **ML**

THE MITCHELLS VS. THE MACHINES 2021**Robot woahs.**

90 Many films have wrestled with modern society's complex relationship with social media, but none have told a story using the visual language of YouTube, TikTok and Instagram as successfully as this Phil Lord and Chris Miller-produced animation. The pair previously made *Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs* and *The Lego Movie*, and *The Mitchells...* is another equally delightful surprise. A robocalypse road movie, it follows the dysfunctional Mitchell family, who unexpectedly become humanity's last hope in the face of the AI uprising. It treads some familiar ground, but the way it's told is relentlessly innovative, blending traditional and cutting-edge styles of animation with meme culture and attention-deficit editing, making for a blistering and fresh ride. **JF**

TOP SECRET! 1984**War fun and games.**

91 With *Airplane!* and *Police Squad!* in their back pocket, comic geniuses ZAZ (David Zucker, Jim Abrahams, Jerry Zucker) decided to indulge their love of both WW2 movies and Elvis Presley musicals, but struggled to fit a plot around the gags. They credit a fourth writer, Martyn Burke, with solving the problem, though the storyline for *Top Secret!* is so thin you could floss your teeth with it: touring East Germany, US rock 'n' roll star Nick Rivers (a fresh-faced Val Kilmer) becomes embroiled in a scheme to rescue an imprisoned scientist. "It has political jokes and boob jokes, dog poop jokes, and ballet jokes," marvelled Roger Ebert upon release, and it's true the movie will throw anything at the screen in the hope that something sticks – and most of it does. Why can't spoofs be like this now? **JG**

**STRIP SERVICE**

The guys learn the basics.

THE FULL MONTY 1997**Naked as nature intended.**

92 Think of it as Ken Loach-lite. Six Sheffield steel-workers, their jobs and their industry uncaringly tossed on the scrapheap, devise an unexpected form of alternative employment – as a male

striptease act. Released just as Tony Blair's New Labour ended 18 years of Tory government, Peter Cattaneo's film targets the Thatcherite destruction of Britain's industrial base and shows us the despair of men robbed – as they see it – of their key role as breadwinners, but heads steadily into feel-good territory as the

ill-assorted bunch (Robert Carlyle, Tom Wilkinson, Mark Addy, Steve Huison, Hugo Speer, Paul Barber) hone their technique and find pride in daring to go 'the full monty'. There's a gloriously unleashed finale as they display their treasures to a whooping female audience – but not, alas, to us. **PK**

M*A*S*H 1970
Not your dad's army.

93 Aged 45 when he made his breakthrough film, Robert Altman wasn't about to waste time playing by anyone else's rules. Pretty much anti everything, Altman's riff on comedy and carnage in the Korean (read: Vietnam) War brims with rule-busting distinction, from its slow zooms to the buzzing dialogue. Altman didn't want big stars, so he struck gold by casting Elliott Gould and Donald Sutherland as frontline medics behaving badly amid the arterial spray. Cast/director relations were fractious, and writer Ring Lardner Jr. was upset about liberties taken with his script. But the latter banked an Oscar and Altman banked a hit: by exposing war's insanity in lurid juxtapositions of humour and horror, his scurrilous satire spoke overlapping volumes to the post-*Easy Rider* countercultural mindset. **KH**

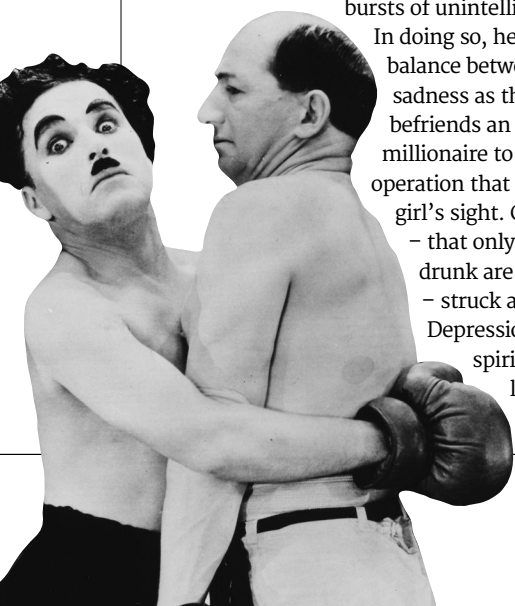


WAR ZONE
Donald Sutherland and Elliott Gould take a break on the frontline.

CITY LIGHTS 1931
Sound of silence.

94 "You ain't heard nothing yet," declared Hollywood with the coming of sound. Charlie Chaplin wasn't listening. Famous enough to ignore what he saw as a fad, the silent clown stuck to his guns with *City Lights*, though he was canny enough to incorporate music, sound effects and bursts of unintelligible speech.

In doing so, he found a perfect balance between slapstick and sadness as the Little Tramp befriends an alcoholic millionaire to pay for the operation that will save a flower girl's sight. Chaplin's message – that only the blind, or blind drunk are kind to the poor – struck a chord during the Depression, and his indie spirit inspired the likes of Welles and Kubrick. **SK**



MANHATTAN 1979
From New York with love.

95 After the confined *Interiors*, Woody Allen revisited and, arguably, refined *Annie Hall*'s tragicomic thrust in an expansive portrait of creative types' romantic vanities. The Oscars didn't notice – "Even Gordon Willis' photography was ignored," the director lamented – but Allen was never keener or wittier on the gaps between self-perception and reality, between talk and feelings. As his neurotic writer Isaac kvetches over and through amorous misfires with his ex wife (Meryl Streep), 17-year-old girlfriend (Mariel Hemingway) and best friend's lover Mary (Diane Keaton), Allen's zingers hit the comic sweetspot on love's foibles. The cinematography is velvety, the Gershwin music sublime, the script literate, but there's also room for nifty oneliners about therapy and a petulant encounter with Mary's ex. In Allen's career, *Manhattan* is a giant. **KH**

DESPICABLE ME 2010
One in a Minion.

96 Long before *Suicide Squad*, sympathetic supervillains faced off in 2010's unlikely boxing bout for the family audience. DreamWorks' *Megamind* was marginally starrier and arguably more sophisticated – but Illumination's *Despicable Me* outfought it with an army of mischievous yellow henchmen. Largely abandoning pop-culture irony for a more timeless tone, this is a memorable mash-up of Gothic fairytale and high-tech Bond villainy as Gru's (Steve Carell) diabolical plan to steal the moon is undone by the arrival of three orphans in his care. The uncluttered, refreshingly superhero-less plot provides scope for subtle character work by Carell, smart sight gags and silly slapstick, the latter dominated by the film's breakout stars. The sequel and spin-off may have stretched Minion-mania past breaking point, but here they're an anarchic thrill. **SK**

THE BLUES BROTHERS

1980

Saturday Night Live-wires.

97 Movies based on *Saturday Night Live* sketches are hit-and-miss, but so is *Saturday Night Live*. All credit to John Landis for super-sizing the gang's anything-goes spirit for the big screen. As titular siblings Jake (John Belushi) and Elwood (Dan Aykroyd) reunite the band on an orphanage-saving "mission from God", Landis blazes through what feels like a big-budget episode of the TV show. It has memorable sketches (playing *Rawhide* for rednecks), A-list music stars from Ray Charles to Aretha Franklin, and celebrity cameos galore (notably an unhinged Carrie Fisher). According to legend the set even had its own private bar, the Blues Club, for drug-soaked after-parties. Yet, for its sheer scale, this screams 'movie', from a gig that rivals the best concerts on film to a budget-burning, 70-vehicle demolition derby. **SK**



SHOW TIME
Dan Aykroyd and
John Belushi are ready
to hit the stage.



RINSE AND REPEAT
Bill Murray's stuck in a time loop as grumpy reporter Phil Connors.

GROUNDHOG DAY 1993

Tomorrow never comes...

98 Bill Murray's at his caustically misanthropic best as Phil Connors, a TV weatherman dispatched to Punxsutawney, PA to observe the ceremony whereby a burrowing rodent is supposed to forecast the next six weeks' weather. Infinitely contemptuous of the whole charade, Phil finds himself trapped in a time-loop condemned to relive Groundhog Day over and over and over again, unless he – unlike the world around him – can learn to change. It's a moral parable, of course, and could easily have turned sententious – but director Harold Ramis, co-scripting with Danny Rubin, holds didacticism at bay, and it's hard to think of anyone but Murray who could have created the perfect sardonic/comic tone. Surprisingly, the shoot was plagued with tensions between director and star, and the pair remained estranged for two decades. **PK**



THE GRADUATE 1967

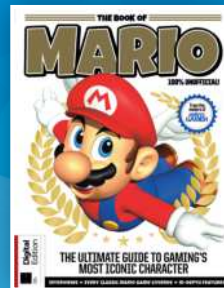
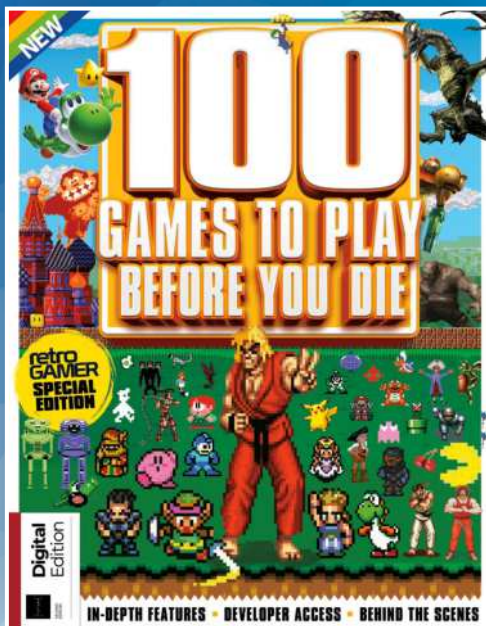
Sure to seduce...

99 The film that made Dustin Hoffman a star – aged 30 despite his youthful, rabbit-in-headlights look. Mike Nichols' *The Graduate* was declared "the funniest American comedy of the year" by uber-critic Roger Ebert and became one of the biggest hits of the decade. Even if you've not seen it you probably know the gist: college grad Benjamin Braddock (Hoffman) returns to his well-to-do Californian suburb to ponder his future (mostly to Simon & Garfunkel hits), is seduced by cougar Mrs. Robinson (Anne Bancroft, excellent) and then falls in love with her daughter (Katharine Ross). With its modish style, gently counter-culture message and palatably presented study of alienation and ennui, this helped pave the way for New Hollywood but, first and foremost, entertains. We have one word: "Plastics." **JG**

BEETLEJUICE 1988

Riot of the living dead.

100 After fallouts with Disney and a hit with *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, Tim Burton got the juice his career needed. It wasn't plain sailing, though. Michael McDowell's original script was too grim for "a feel-good movie about death", and Warner Bros. actually considered the title 'Scared Sheetless' when Burton suggested it as a joke. Sammy Davis Jr. was almost cast as the say-it-three-times zombie hired by newlydeads to rid their haunt of living yuppie scum, until David Geffen suggested Michael Keaton, who erupted from the screen like hot lava as eyeboggling bioexorcist Betelgeuse. The wired hybrid of Burton's riotous visuals, Warren Skaaren's musical script rewrite and Keaton's showstealing 17.5 minutes' screen time turn the afterlife into a deathless blast: even after Burton's many variations on its outsider sympathies, *Beetlejuice* still feels fresh. **KH**



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A full-page photograph of a man in Roman-style armor, including a dark leather tunic with straps and a wide belt, and light-colored trousers. He has a determined, shouting expression with his mouth wide open and his arms outstretched to the sides. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with warm, golden light.

PART 2
ACTION

100

MUST-SEE ACTION MOVIES

Seen 'em yet?

■ Raging Bull	■ 1917	■ Drunken Master II
■ True Lies	■ The Karate Kid	■ The Dirty Dozen
■ Braveheart	■ Ben-Hur	■ The Searchers
■ Hero	■ Goldfinger	■ Once Upon A Time In The West
■ Avengers: Infinity War	■ The Incredibles	■ Spartacus
■ Hot Fuzz	■ 300	■ Zulu
■ The Bourne Ultimatum	■ Fast Five	■ Point Break
■ Bullitt	■ Raiders Of The Lost Ark	■ On Her Majesty's Secret Service
■ The Long Kiss Goodnight	■ Ant-Man	■ The Thin Red Line
■ Seven Samurai	■ Ran	■ The Great Escape
■ The Big Red One	■ Intolerance	■ Lawrence Of Arabia
■ Apocalypse Now	■ Sin City	■ Terminator 2: Judgment Day
■ The Dark Knight	■ The Right Stuff	■ Mad Max: Fury Road
■ Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	■ Enter The Dragon	■ Die Hard
■ Face/Off	■ Three Kings	■ Runaway Train
■ Gone With The Wind	■ Batman Begins	■ Goldeneye
■ Guardians Of The Galaxy	■ Cross Of Iron	■ Avengers: Endgame
■ The Magnificent Seven	■ Paths Of Glory	■ The Good, The Bad And The Ugly
■ First Blood	■ Rocky	■ Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse
■ Con Air	■ Romancing The Stone	■ Gallipoli
■ Casino Royale	■ Ong Bak	■ The Adventures Of Robin Hood
■ Platoon	■ Speed	■ The Deer Hunter
■ Kick-Ass	■ Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior	■ Hard Boiled
■ Iron Man	■ Lethal Weapon	■ War
■ The Raid	■ Skyfall	■ Jurassic Park
■ Aguirre, The Wrath Of God	■ Saving Private Ryan	■ The Wild Bunch
■ The Rock	■ Mission: Impossible	■ Ronin
■ Gladiator	■ Kill Bill, Vols 1 And 2	■ Police Story
■ Avengers Assemble	■ From Russia With Love	■ Scarface
■ Das Boot	■ The Bridge On The River Kwai	■ Sorcerer
■ Dr. No	■ Aliens	■ Léon: The Professional
■ The Fugitive	■ The Hurt Locker	■ Predator
■ The Killer	■ Kingsman: The Secret Service	■ Top Gun
		■ Dragon Inn

KNOCK OUT

Robert De Niro takes it on the chin and wins an Oscar.



RAGING BULL 1980

Cheers still ring in the ears.

01 Based on the true story of troubled Italian-American boxer Jake LaMotta, *Raging Bull* is considered the peak of Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro's combined powers. The project originated when De Niro read LaMotta's memoir *Raging Bull: My Story* on the set of *Godfather II* and showed it to his friend Scorsese, who initially didn't want to make the film because of his lack of interest in the sport. But once Marty realised the human element of the story, with the boxing ring working as "an allegory for whatever you do in life," he agreed to take on the project. De Niro's passion took him to the outer limits of method acting, gaining a significant amount of weight to portray LaMotta later in life, whilst gaining the sleek skills of a real boxer to show the early stages of his career. His dedication paid off, winning a deserved Best Actor Oscar. **SA**

TRUE LIES 1994**"I married Rambo!"**

02 James Cameron's spirited action-comedy pays tribute to the Bond movies of the 1970s, but is very much its own beast. Arnold Schwarzenegger is Harry, the top ranking government agent who lives a double life as a dull computer rep, and Jamie Lee Curtis is his unsuspecting wife, who begins an affair with a used car salesman. Not only does Harry have that to worry about, however, but a terrorist named Salim Abu Aziz is threatening to nuke the US.

James Cameron proves yet again he's the king of the big-budget action sequence. The movie's final half-hour, in particular, is a tour de force of mayhem that involves helicopters, limos and Harrier jump jets and is so gloriously OTT that you have to ask where the fun has gone in spy movies since then. And while Schwarzenegger spent the '90s flitting from action movie to comedy flick, *True Lies* gives us the best of both Arnies. **S'OB**



PILOT SCHEME
Arnold Schwarzenegger's Harry takes a break from his desk job.

BRAVEHEART 1995**No Indy Refs here.**

03 It doesn't matter that it was filmed in Ireland. No one cares that an Australian played a Scotsman. When it all boils down to it, Mel Gibson's stirring and, well, largely fictitious, tale of Caledonian freedom fighter William Wallace is a true modern epic. Gibson juggled the roles of both star and director effortlessly and the result is kind of unbelievable, with soaring camera shots of craggy highland mountains, exceptional performances and a slew of blood-drenched battles.

While his romances fall almost into melodrama, the same can't be said of the action and gore. Limbs are lopped off, buttocks pierced by arrows, throats messily slit and all to a rousing score from James Horner. **LB**

**HERO 2002****The colour of magic.**

04 *Hero* is famous for its cinematography... and for the turmoil around its release. The most expensive project in Chinese film history, Miramax delayed its international launch six times. Big-name fan Quentin Tarantino intervened, securing a US release in 2004. It became the first foreign language film to open at number one in the US box office.

Yimou Zhang's epic is a hyperreal take on the chivalric martial arts genre, told in a series of flashbacks. Jet Li's master swordsman visits court and describes how he defeated three assassins.

The king suspects trickery and recounts his own version of events. Neither version is the whole truth and each segment glows with a single colour theme: black, red, blue, green and white. A vast tale of sacrifice and honour. **DB**

AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR 2018**To infinity, and beyond.**

05 The 19th film in the all-conquering Marvel Cinematic Universe had a tougher job than any that came before, uniting disparate characters from friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man Peter Parker to cosmic tree guy Groot in an effort to stop Mad Titan Thanos collecting all six Infinity Stones, and snapping half the universe out of existence. It should have been unwieldy and impenetrable. Instead, Marvel Studios produced a mammoth-scale blockbuster of clockwork elegance, giving dozens of beloved characters memorable moments, and introducing a complex anti-villain that finally put to rest the long-held belief that Marvel had a bad-guy problem. Better yet: it climaxed with a bravura, gut-punch ending that left audiences reeling and counting down the days to the grand finale of *Avengers: Endgame*. **JF**

HOT FUZZ 2007

"Proper action and shit!"

06 *Hot Fuzz* had probably the hardest sell of Pegg and Wright's Cornetto Trilogy. Effectively a full-throttle US action movie transposed to rural England with a trace of horror classics *The Wicker Man* and *Straw Dogs* in its DNA, it's a genre mashup that must have looked unmarketable in Hollywood. Wonderfully, it's probably the best of the three films. The jokes are as sharp as *Shaun Of The Dead*'s, the cast a who's who of great British actors old and new (Timothy Dalton, Edward Woodward and David Bradley to name just three) and the action – when it kicks off in the breathtaking final act – is as genuinely exciting as anything put on screen by the likes of Michael Bay or John Woo, despite it involving an army of pensioners, a supermarket shoot-out and the *Neighbourhood Watch*. An action comedy classic? Yarp. **WS**



COP LAND
Pegg and Frost head up a police force that gets things done.

THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM 2007

Coming full circle.

07 If *The Bourne Supremacy* was Greengrass limbering up, *The Bourne Ultimatum* is where he smashed the world record for the 100m dash. Intelligent, thrillingly relevant and exhilarating from start to finish, *Ultimatum* is Bourne's best outing. Set seconds after the end of *Supremacy*, Bourne is forced back into action by a journalist whose work on a story to expose Blackbriar gets him killed in the middle of a crowded Waterloo station; few directors are capable of crafting clarity out of complete chaos like Greengrass. Breath-snatching car chases, rooftop foot races and brutal fist fights follow before the film (smartly) slams on the brakes for an ending that doesn't just provide satisfying answers to three films worth of mystery, but leaves Bourne exactly where he started. **JF**

BULLITT 1968

Talk to Frank.

08 Has anyone ever been as effortlessly cool as Steve McQueen in *Bullitt*? SFPD Lieutenant Frank Bullitt (McQueen) is charged by local politician Walter Chalmers (Robert Vaughn) to guard Chicago Mob informer Johnny Ross ahead of a senate hearing. When Ross is gunned down, Bullitt is held responsible, but not everything is as it seems.

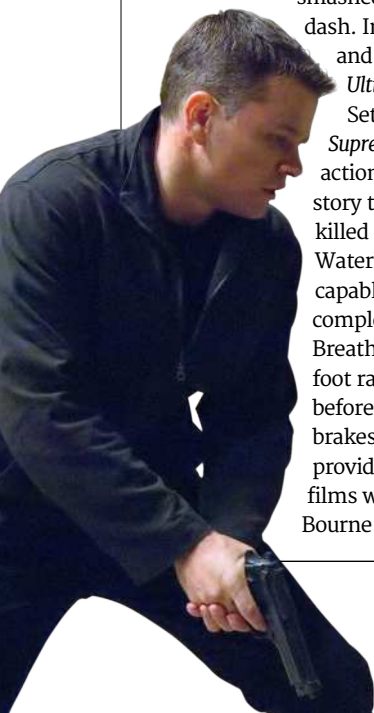
Bullitt set the template for gritty cop films for the next decade and beyond, with everything from *Dirty Harry* to *The French Connection* owing a debt to Frank's adventure. A highlight is the car chase through the streets of San Francisco. The sequence took three weeks to film, producing just under ten minutes of screen time on a route that's actually impossible to follow in real life.

Both the film and the car chase have often been imitated but arguably have never been bettered. **DF**

THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT 1996

Deadlier than the male...

09 Way before Jason Bourne, there was Samantha Caine. Another of those conveniently amnesiac CIA agents put out to grass – but this time played by Geena Davis at her inspired ditsiest. She's a suburban soccer mom who suddenly starts getting weird flashbacks and reacquiring violent skills – just at the point where her ex-colleagues decide she's a risk and should be eliminated. So she's on the run, along with Samuel L. Jackson cast against type as a lily-livered private eye. Renny Harlin's action spoof dishes up all the required shoot-outs, impossible athletic feats, explosions, split-second escapes and the rest but keeps its tongue firmly in its cheek. At one point production company New Line considered making Sam male and offering the lead to Steven Seagal or Sylvester Stallone. Thankfully, they re-thought. **PK**





SEVEN SAMURAI 1954

The real magnificent seven.

10 Akira Kurosawa's classic is a landmark in action cinema, with many of the things you love about the genre coming together for the first time here, whether it's the reluctant hero finding the inner-strength to save the day, or slow motion being used to denote dramatic flair. But forget the historical significance, *Seven Samurai*'s real legacy is its timeless nature. It's as entertaining today as it was when it first blew audiences away.

The plot is simple: a village of poor farmers hire seven ronin (masterless samurai) to protect their crops from rampaging bandits who keep stealing their harvest, but from that Kurosawa builds an epic. Its star Toshiro Mifune considered it his greatest role which, considering he also made *Rashomon*, *Throne Of Blood* and *Yojimbo*, is pretty impressive. A firm favourite of George Lucas, it'll be one of yours too. **SA**

THE BIG RED ONE 1980

No place for heroes...

11 Right after Pearl Harbor, Sam Fuller enlisted, joining the 1st US Infantry Division, known from its badge design as 'the Big Red One'. As an NCO he fought in North Africa, Sicily and on Omaha Beach. Back in Hollywood after the war, he battled for 25 years to make this epic tribute to his old unit. Lee Marvin's the grizzled sergeant leading his squad through the carnage of WW2, doing his best to keep his boys alive; said Fuller: "The primary motive in all my war movies is survival, not heroism," and this cynical realism pervades the movie. When *The Big Red One* was finished, the studio lopped a third off the running time before releasing it. Not until after Fuller's death did film critic Richard Schickel restore the film to a 'director's cut' of 160 minutes, close to the original intention. So that's the version to go for. **PK**

APOCALYPSE NOW 1979

The horror, the horror.

12 Frances Ford Coppola's adaptation of Conrad's novel *Heart Of Darkness* still holds tremendous power. Martin Sheen's Captain Willard is sent deep into the Cambodian jungle to take out a general gone rogue (Marlon Brando). As defining moments go, there aren't just one or two... Few movies have left scars like this on our collective cinematic consciousness.

From Wagner's 'Ride Of The Valkyries' blasting from helicopters while bombing Vietnamese villages, to quips about the smell of napalm in the morning, *Apocalypse Now* is a brutal portrayal of the pointlessness of war. Equally interesting is the making-of documentary, *Hearts Of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, where you'll see exactly how Coppola himself came close to madness during production. **LB**



MUDDY WATER
Martin Sheen goes under cover of the night.

THE DARK KNIGHT 2008

Joker's wild.

13 In the years since Christopher Nolan's second spin in the Batmobile, *The Dark Knight* has taken on almost mythic status. If *Batman Begins* was the superhero movie as thrilling pulp adventure, *The Dark Knight* is a modern noir thriller that references *Heat* as much as it does *The Killing Joke*. Surprisingly for a Batman movie, it's set largely in the cold light of day as Heath Ledger's Joker runs rampant in Gotham City. A nihilistic agent of chaos with no fixed back-story and no goal other than destruction, he's a truly terrifying villain, one who rather steals the show from Christian Bale's excellent (if overly gravelly) Batman. Additional complexity comes in the form of Aaron Eckhart as Harvey Dent – the idealistic DA who finds himself caught between the Dark Knight and the Clown Prince of Crime with tragic results. **WS**

SCENE STEALER

Heath Ledger was awarded a posthumous Oscar for his portrayal of the Joker.

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON 2000

Wonderful wires.

14 A deeply beautiful film that oozes class from every frame, Ang Lee's 'wire-fu' magnum opus is a sumptuously shot and hypnotic martial arts-er.

Part operatic love story, part fight cinema, and all masterpiece, the somewhat mournful melodrama is never less than visually stunning. With its deliciously framed, pristine photography and the balletic grace of the aerial brawls, rarely has onscreen fighting been this jaw-slackeningly striking.

What's remarkable is the director's utter conviction in the material and his ability to sell that vision to the audience. The combatants float across the scenery defying gravity? Oh yes. Spend two hours in the company of this film and you'll believe a Wudang warrior can fly too. **MH**



PUT 'EM UP!
One of the more conventional fighting stances in the movie...

FACE/OFF 1997

Plastic fantastic.

15 "I could eat a peach for hours," whispers Nic Cage's bug-eyed maniac Castor Troy, in John Woo's audacious action blast. Turning up in 1997 with a brazen swagger, it acts like cinema owes it a favour.

Not since *Wild At Heart* had Cage looked like he was having quite so much fun in a role. Or, for that matter, John Travolta, still riding the wave of his post *Pulp Fiction* career renaissance. If you've not seen it (why?), the plot is simple, yet brilliant. Travolta's cop Sean Archer face-trades with Cage's (very) arch criminal Castor Troy for... reasons. They spar. They fight. They inhabit magical screen time together.

The two leads are little short of mesmeric; gurning, winking, and sparkling as they go. All woven into the tapestry of the director's trademark slo-mo balletic flair and extreme violence. Exceptional. **MH**

GONE WITH THE WIND 1939

"Frankly, my dear..."

16 Adapted from Margaret Mitchell's best-selling Civil War novel and set in an ultra-romanticised vision of the Old South, this was the costliest, most ballyhooed Hollywood production of its era. Yet both Clark Gable and Leslie Howard only reluctantly agreed to appear in it. George Cukor was initially assigned to direct, but got sacked by producer David O. Selznick and replaced by Victor Fleming – much to Vivien Leigh's annoyance, since she liked Cukor and found Fleming overly macho. But for all this, the film was hugely successful on its initial release, and at just under four hours was the longest film ever to net a Best Picture Oscar. Hokey it may be, with attitudes a long way off PC, but *GWTW* – thanks not least to Max Steiner's luscious score – still maintains its status as the best-loved epic costume drama of all time. **PK**

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY 2014

High on believin'.

17 After Shane Black's *Iron Man 3* infused the Marvel films with indie cred, and *The Winter Soldier* co-opted the tone and conceits of a political thriller, there was only one thing for *Guardians* to do: go weird and see how much Marvel could get away with. Maintaining the studio's flair for character, dialogue and warmth amid the spectacle, it's one of the MCU's most engaging and affecting films to date, despite the fact that Bradley Cooper is a gun-toting raccoon, Vin Diesel is a tree and there's a cameo by Howard the Duck. With Chris Pratt's Peter Quill holding the whole thing together with both machine-gun quips and pathos, *Guardians* is one of Marvel's most visually arresting, and ironically human, films to date. **DH**





SEVEN WONDERS
The classic Western was remade in 2016, and received mixed reviews.

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN 1960

From East to West...

18 Even if John Sturges' Western doesn't quite outclass Kurosawa's 1954 *Seven Samurai*, the material translates seamlessly to its new context. Sturges assembles an impressive cast, with Yul Brynner impassively heading up a band of professional killers who come together to defend a Mexican peasant village against ruthless bandits. Steve McQueen, as Brynner's sardonic second-in-command, and James Coburn as the taciturn knife-fighter stand out, while Eli Wallach, squinting suspiciously, chews the scenery as the bandit leader, anticipating his equally full-flavoured performance in *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly*. Elmer Bernstein's striding, unforgettable march-theme stands as the archetypal Western score – besides lending the film a pulse-quickenning drive. As Bernstein noted, "Observe that the music is often faster in tempo than anything that is actually happening on the screen." **PK**



FIRST BLOOD 1982

Rambo roars into action.

19 Our first introduction to Stallone's other big role, *First Blood* is often mistaken for one of its bodycount sequels. It's really not that.

Concerning fragile Vietnam veteran John Rambo's sanity snap at the hands of a vindictive small-town Sheriff (Brian Dennehy), what's perhaps surprising is the restraint of both central character and the film itself. Straight from the literary source material, there is a palpable attempt to build Stallone's wounded antihero as both protagonist and antagonist. With a sympathetic lens and survival flashbacks, Kotcheff captures the internal conflict that drives the bandana-wearing one man army.

That said, there's still fisticuffs, explosion aplenty and a wonderfully arch Richard Crenna playing against his testosterone-charged Alpha. If we're honest, *First Blood* really is the only drop of Rambo's claret you need savour. **MH**

CON AIR 1997

Airforce fun.

20 A supreme slice of big dumb fun, *Con Air*'s existence almost seems like a drunken bet between producers to up the genre's ante at every available turn.

"Let's do *Die Hard* on a plane!"

"Yeah, but make *THE WHOLE PLANE* full of baddies!"

"How about Nic Cage as the hero?"

"OK then: a proper thesp like John Malkovich as the lead bad guy?"

"Well, that's just silly."

A solidly entertaining, tightly-wound blast of escalating insanity, the Jerry Bruckheimer-produced blockbuster might defy belief and critics, but it's one helluva Friday night in with a few beers and a wall-trembling sound system.

This is a movie made for the purest blood-pump of testosterone. What it lacks in subtlety, it more than makes up for in cartoon combat. Book your flight with *Con Air*: all seats first class. **MH**

CASINO ROYALE

2006

Bond begins.

21 In 2006, action fans were more interested in Jason Bourne than the other fella. Drastic measures would be required if the Bond franchise was to endure. First order? A new lead... The icy, edgy, suspiciously blond Daniel Craig makes a strong first impression here - we're introduced to him in a monochrome prologue which sees him throttling a bad guy in a toilet that's a world away from Pierce Brosnan's post-kill quips. There's also a new found focus on character development, a refreshing frankness when it comes to Bond's flaws and even the faintest hint of feminism. After the thrilling opening hour, the film switches pace, honing in on a game of cards between Bond and nefarious crim Le Chiffre, but it's the potent, inevitably doomed, romance between Bond and Vespa (Eva Green) that resonates. By the time we get to the final "Bond, James Bond", it sounds less a catchphrase, more a resigned acceptance of fate. **WS**

TRIGGER FINGER
Daniel Craig in the first of his five Bond films.



REACH OUT
Oliver Stone's movie
bagged four Oscars,
including Best Picture.

PLATOON 1986

Hell is the impossibility of reason.

22 The late '80s were a ripe time for Vietnam dramas, but none – not even the mighty Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* – has the sheen of gut-wrenching authenticity that *Platoon* has. Written and directed by Vietnam vet Oliver Stone, it follows the story of US Army volunteer Chris Taylor (a never better Charlie Sheen) as he begins his tour of duty in south-east Asia.

Casting Sheen was a masterstroke, given how his father, Martin, had headlined that other great Vietnam movie, *Apocalypse Now*. But while Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film was an impressionist acid trip nightmare, *Platoon* is played straight. There's no hazy, hallucinogenic camera tricks to shirk the brutality of the Vietnam War here, and Stone is ballsy enough to show our heroes acting unheroically. War makes monsters of us all is the very clear message. **S'OB**



KICK-ASS 2010

Playtime's over.

23 Written in unison with Millar and Romita's comic series, *Kick-Ass* features teen Dave Lizewski costuming up as a wetsuit-clad crime fighter. Aided by the homicidal Hit-Girl (Chloe Moretz) and her unhinged Pops (a reliably goofy Nic Cage), the unlikely heroes plan to take down Mark Strong's criminal empire by any means necessary. And we mean any.

Matthew Vaughan's comic book movie is a bold splash of kinetic comedy and hard-edged bloody violence. Irreverent, foul-mouthed and gleefully savage, it's a subversive take on the superhero genre, making playful jabs at its conventions throughout. Parental tragedy? Yes, but twisted. Extravagantly attired villain? Yeah, but he's got issues. Zero to hero ascendancy? Not exactly. Compulsively entertaining with a pace that pops, *Kick-Ass* makes good on its name. **MH**

IRON MAN 2008

RDJ saves the day.

24 In hindsight, kicking off the Marvel Cinematic Universe with a C-list superhero was a great move. Minimising the risk of failure to a dimly-remembered pop art tin man, Marvel could have quietly disowned a false start and had another go if it failed. But of course, they had a nuclear weapon in their arsenal: Robert Downey Jr.

As half-soaked billionaire Tony Stark, the twinkle-eyed star exudes charisma in every scene, somehow even managing to steal the film from his robotic alter-ego. Seriously, there's a reason director Jon Favreau keeps his face in frame during the action sequences, rather than focusing on the mask: RDJ is a camera magnet.

With a fervent bounce and jaunty humour that distances itself from DC's darker grit, Marvel's first-born is a refreshing blast of soda that delivers heavy metal with panache. **MH**

THE RAID 2011

Tower assault.

25 Indonesian martial arts that dials up the intensity and aggression with such lightning speed and bone-crunching ferocity, the action damn near melts the lens. Coupled with the migraine thud of a bombastic but dynamic sound design, Gareth Evans' second feature boasts fist-pumping triumph with every punch thrown.

The plot is like an arcade game: cop enters hostile tenement to ascend levels of increasing hostility to vanquish crime boss. Its uncomplicated story makes for a streamlined popcorn beat 'em up that dares the audience not to blink.

Simply, *The Raid* contains some of the most astonishingly staged and deftly choreographed fight scenes in all of cinema. This jaw-dropping, awe-commanding action piece outdoes everything that went before it, and likely everything that'll follow for decades to come. No really, it's that good. **MH**

AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD 1972

Welcome to the jungle...

26 The first of five fractious collaborations between director Werner Herzog and star Klaus Kinski, this recreates the doomed expedition of Gonzalo Pizarro, who in 1560 led a body of men down the Amazon River in search of the lost city of gold El Dorado. A story of obsession and madness, the film's making is every bit as crazed: five weeks of screaming matches in the Peruvian jungle, with Kinski terrorising cast and crew (he shot the tip off one extra's finger). The on-set lunacy amid pitiless locations informs the film, but the film is transcendent in its beauty, be it the dots of men clambering down a mist-wreathed mountain, a boat left high and dry in a tree or Kinski's saintly blue eyes peering out from a face twisted in torment. Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, by the director's admission, owes a debt. **JG**

THE ROCK 1996

Aaaaaalcatraz...

27 Eight words. "They don't make 'em like they used to." Michael Bay's high octane romp – oh, it's totally a romp – is prime high concept '90s action fodder. It's almost nonsensical as a spurned US general points all manner of deadly chemical weapons at San Francisco from Alcatraz Island, but the pairing of Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage as ex-con John Patrick Mason and biochemist Stanley Goodspeed is a masterstroke.

Cage and Connery make for a hilarious double act. Connery is of course the only grizzled human to ever make it off the titular Rock alive and chews the scenery up with gusto, while Cage's hapless biochemist evolves into the action hero he's played ever since. The City By The Bay doesn't exactly go unscathed with slews of explosions amidst the iconic cable cars but Connery and Cage save both the day and the movie. **LB**

**FIGHT CLUB**

Russell Crowe goes into battle against man and beast in the Scott spectacular.

GLADIATOR 2000

Are you not entertained?

28 The ultimate modern sword and sandals epic, Ridley Scott's multi-Oscar winner is still as impressive as it was, wait for it, over 20 years ago. Russell Crowe's performance as Maximus Decimus Meridius ("father of a murdered son,

husband to a murdered wife") kicked his career into the Hollywood stratosphere and Maximus' journey from army general to ultimate champion of the colosseum had us all baying for blood like a Roman crowd.

Gladiator's breathtaking battle sequences are impossible to forget. From the spinning blades of chariots gorily meeting legs on the sand, to a

one-on-one brawl with a tiger in front of a baying mob, it's an eye-searing actioner. Add in Joaquin Phoenix's performance as the utterly corrupt son of the emperor, a fitting final performance from Oliver Reed, and a triumphant score from Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard, and it deserves every single one of those shiny gold statues. **LB**

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE 2012

(Hulk) Smashing fun.

29 Joss Whedon + superheroes = a match made in action cinema heaven. The *Buffy* creator had long been channelling his love of Marvel comics in his work, and *Avengers Assemble* (just *The Avengers* everywhere else) is a superlative culmination of the first phase of Marvel Studios movies. Iron Man, Thor, Captain America, Hulk and chums come together to take down Tom Hiddleston's Loki and his army of faintly generic aliens. But despite the layers of continuity and fan-pleasing moments, Whedon keeps the film accessible to non-True Believers. It's fast, funny and told on a human scale (the film tilts on the death of one minor character), but also delivers on the bruising action and effects. The Marvel films have gotten bigger since, but arguably none have managed to be quite so cheerfully crowd-pleasing. **WS**



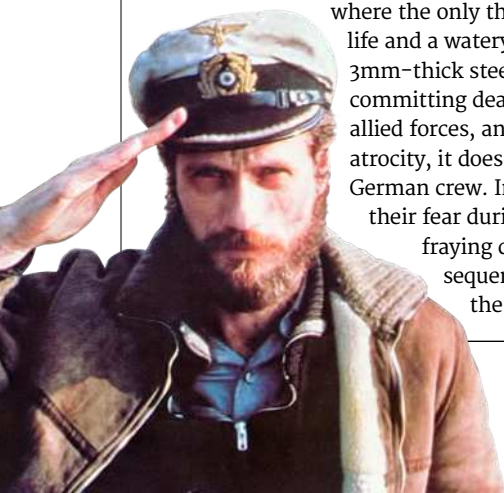
WAR FOOTING
Chris Hemsworth's Thor and Chris Evans' Cap cause all sorts of damage.

DAS BOOT 1981

Sub mission.

30 With all due respect to *The Hunt For Red October*, Wolfgang Petersen's sub-aquatic classic about the (fictional) crew of the (real) U-96 U-boat during WWII is the greatest submarine movie ever made.

There are multiple versions available, but all are worth your time. Told from the perspective of a naïve war correspondent, it's a film about the psychological and physical toll on men hundreds of feet beneath the sea, where the only thing between life and a watery grave is a 3mm-thick steel hull. Despite committing deadly acts against allied forces, and at least one atrocity, it doesn't vilify the German crew. Instead you feel their fear during the nerve-fraying depth charge sequence and lament the loss of life. **JF**



DR. NO 1962

007's first assignment.

31 It's surprising how much Bond establishes straight from the off. From the monochrome depths of his pork pie hatted entrance, the screen ruptures with a bold burst of colour and brass, signalling the spy's vibrant adventures to come. From fisticuffs to improbably named love interests, *Dr. No* teases the series' template right from the off and mostly gets away with it.

Secret service agent James Bond travels to Jamaica to investigate shady shenanigans for Queen and country. It's a travelogue adventure that flits sometimes awkwardly between stiff colonial imperialism and 1960s pop comic smarts.

But never mind the ladies, music, or Joseph Wiseman's villain hiding out in a fantastical lair (thanks Ken Adam) – feel the growling purr of Connery's charismatic central performance. He is Bond, James Bond. **MH**

THE FUGITIVE 1993

One-armed bandit.

32 "I did not kill my wife!" Everyone loves a good whodunit, especially when the whodunit involves an enigmatic one-armed man, Harrison Ford on the run from injustice and Tommy Lee Jones at his curmudgeonly best. Boasting exhilarating action sequences, near-perfect pacing and a satisfying amount of smarts during an era when Jean-Claude Van Damme playing a cop who travelled through time on a rollercoaster was the best we could hope for; Andrew Davis' action thriller is also that rarest of beasts – a remake that outshines the original. The aces up its sleeve are its beautifully balanced protagonists – Jones' Samuel Gerard every bit the hero Kimble is, even if they're (temporarily) on opposite sides of the law. Gerard got his own spin-off movie, *U.S. Marshals*, five years later, but it only proved the real alchemy of *The Fugitive* was its central duo. **JF**



THE KILLER 1989

Bullet time...

33 Made as a love letter to Jean-Pierre Melville and Martin Scorsese, John Woo's iconic actioner buries a hokey plot – a hitman (Chow Yun-Fat) must do one last job to pay to restore the sight of a beautiful cabaret singer he blinded on a previous assignment – under a swarm of lead. *The Killer* might have been shot for just \$2m, but Woo had a whopping 90 days to orchestrate his bullet-ballets, with 36 of them dedicated to the climactic shootout alone. Rampantly OTT, the whole movie is as gorgeously choreographed as any MGM musical, its bar-raising spectacle so thrilling that western action films soon pilfered the signature flourishes and Woo himself was lured to Hollywood. Before he went he made another ballistic masterpiece in *Hard Boiled*, but none of his US efforts – not even the bonkers *Face/Off* – come close to attaining this level of mayhem. **JG**

1917 2019

Squaddie goals.

34 'Oners' are common enough in film to have their own name, but there are few single-take movies that compare to *1917* for sheer technical bravado. Shot by esteemed cinematographer Roger Deakins for his frequent collaborator Sam Mendes, *1917* is a WW1 movie told over two seemingly unbroken takes. In reality, numerous long shots were stitched together, but the ultimate effect is the same whether you spot the seams or not – *1917* has a breathless intensity that puts you so close to the action you can practically smell the gunpowder. Inspired by Mendes' grandfather (a messenger for the British Army on the Western Front) the storytelling is largely functional, but George MacKay's performance as harried Lance Corporal Schofield, Thomas Newman's rousing score and the film's extraordinary visual prowess elevate it well above the war-movie norm. **JF**

THE KARATE KID 1984

"Teacher say, student do."

35 When Ralph Macchio's earnest adolescent Daniel moves from New Jersey to LA, he doesn't reckon on falling in love with Ali, and falling out of favour with her ex-boyfriend's gang of ass-kicking thugs from the local dojo. Befriending his eccentric elderly neighbour, he soon learns to defend himself with martial-arts moves.

There is a generation of 40-somethings for whom the phrase, "wax on, wax off" will mean more than mere buffing technique. The kids' very own *Rocky* (same director), *The Karate Kid* nails the "triumph over adversity" sports movies of the 1980s and is the go-to example of that decade's odds-stacked triumphalism.

Oscar-nominated Pat Morita's wise sage Mr. Miyagi is the kind-hearted centre of this gooey feel-good cheese fest. **MH**



TAKE THAT
Daniel (Ralph Macchio)
puts what he's learnt
into practice.



BEN-HUR 1959

Toga, toga, burning bright...

36 Back in the silent era, at the outset of his career, William Wyler acted as one of multiple assistant directors on the 1925 *Ben-Hur*. Thirty-four years later, he assumed supreme control of the massive-budgeted remake, “just to see if I know how to make a picture like this”. The high point of Hollywood’s cycle of biblical epics, crowned with 11 Oscars out of 12 nominations, it looks nothing short of impressive, and the famous chariot race (for which second director Andrew Marton deserves credit) is pulse-quickeningly gripping. Elsewhere things get a touch ponderous, though there’s fun to be had from teasing out the gay subtext – suggested, it’s said, by Gore Vidal, called in for script work. Gore suggested to Stephen Boyd, playing Massala, ex-friend and now sworn enemy of Ben-Hur (Charlton Heston), that his was the resentment of a spurned one-time lover. “But better not mention it to Chuck,”

Gore advised. **PK**

DRIVE ANGRY

Charlton Heston handles his chariot in the classic race sequence.

GOLDFINGER 1964

He's the man...

37 An ebullient, cocky swagger of a spy film, director Guy Hamilton not only gave the Bond franchise a brash arse-kick, but magically inscribed its blueprint in doing so.

Goldfinger is the pure distilled essence of Bond in one film. From the irreverent – and equally irrelevant – pre-credits scene that bursts into the brassy blast of Shirley Bassey, EON productions set out their series' stall from the gun barrel onwards.

Oddjob. Death by paint. Gadget laden DB5. Q's workshop. John Barry's score. Pussy Galore. Ken Adam's magnificent sets. "No, Mr Bond, I expect you to die!" Every line's quotable, every scene iconic.

If you've only seen one Bond film, then you should probably watch more Bond films. But if you want the one that perfected the template, set the mould, and crystallises the franchise's formula, this is the 007 for you. **MH**



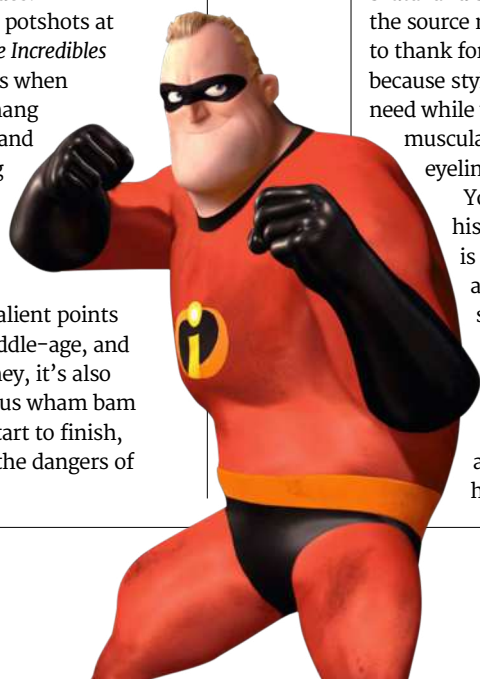
LASER QUEST
Gert Frobe's *Goldfinger* probes James Bond – who won't talk...

THE INCREDIBLES 2004

Super family values.

38 Fairly unusually for an animated film, *The Incredibles* more or less begins with a botched suicide attempt. That's a big hat tip to the kind of subversive convention-busting Brad Bird's film has in spades.

Taking affectionate potshots at superhero comics, *The Incredibles* looks at what happens when costumed vigilantes hang up the tights, get old and raise families. Forcing Mr Incredible to become Mr Parr, the hero's journey from insurance clerk back to day-saver makes salient points about conformity, middle-age, and childhood idols. But hey, it's also packed full of ingenious wham bam action, laughs from start to finish, and the last word on the dangers of superhero capes. **MH**

**300 2006**

A Spartan existence.

39 If you don't already have "This is Sparta!" echoing in your feeble mortal ears then that really needs changing. Also known as, "when Zack Snyder got it right" 300 is big, brutal and beautiful. Perhaps we have the source material from Frank Miller to thank for that, or perhaps it's because style over substance is what you need while watching 300 half-naked muscular men fight off 100,000 eyeliner-clad Persians.

You don't have to know your history to know that every shot is an eye-offensive of blood and gore, perfectly arc-ing sprays of B positive flying through the air as heads are lopped off and chests pierced with spears. The Tyler Bates soundtrack that accompanies the action is heart-pounding stuff too. **LB**

FAST FIVE 2011

Start your engines.

40 OK, it shouldn't work. No one should be adding the fifth addition to a franchise to a must-see movies list but here it is. Justin Lin's explosive crash-fest sees the crew reuniting for one last job – and of course it involves stealing \$100 million from a drug lord in Rio while trying to escape arrest from Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson's DSS agent Luke Hobbs.

As your wildest dreams have already told you, matching The Rock with Vin Diesel makes for brilliant comedy and if you aren't spending time enjoying the complete disregard for physics as cars fly through the air, you'll be appreciating the pair in action. Yes, it's exceptionally big and, of course, ludicrously stupid, but there's something gloriously entertaining about this level of ridiculousness that means *Fast Five* is far better than it has any right to be. Pile up the popcorn. You'll need it. **LB**

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK 1981

Indiana Jones' first crusade.

41 *Raiders* is still a film that few, if any, have managed to match. A masterpiece of pacing, set-piece design, and action choreography, what elevates *Raiders* far above the spellbinding technical exercise is the sheer amount of wit fuelling each and every moment. Not a single action sequence goes by without a pitch-perfect sight-gag or giddily spontaneous character spot. No element of its pulpy plot is treated without total respect or a knowing wink about the tropes being played with. And while it almost goes without saying that Harrison Ford's Indiana Jones is a flawlessly portrayed action hero, it really shouldn't. There's still something special in his first outing as Indy, a twinkly, effervescent magic in his grinning charm, a relatable everyman weariness in his laconic drollness. **DH**



OH BALLS
Indy (Harrison Ford)
discovers how imaginative
security systems can be.

ANT-MAN 2015

Miniature Marvel.

42 The Marvel movies have made a virtue of their interconnectedness, but after the bloat of *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* it was clear that things needed to get back to basics – and fast. *Ant-Man* repeats the trick of the original *Iron Man*, introducing us to a scuzzy but likeable anti-hero – this time around Paul Rudd's minor crim Scott Lang – and turning him into a hero. Despite the high-profile departure of original director Edgar Wright and the parachuting in of his replacement, Peyton Reed, the film somehow still feels effortlessly fresh. The set-pieces centred around Lang's ability to shrink and grow things at will are inspired, making great use of a Thomas The Tank Engine toy, and his flying ant companion Antony will steal your heart. An effortlessly loveable super-caper. **WS**



RAN 1985

To play the King....

43 Three times Kurosawa drew on Shakespearean tragedies for his material. *Throne Of Blood* reworks *Macbeth* as a samurai drama. *Hamlet* plays out in the corrupt executive world of modern Tokyo in *The Bad Sleep Well*. And his last great film, *Ran*, is his epic version of *King Lear*, transposed to strife-torn 16th-century Japan. Ageing warlord Hidetora (Tatsuya Nakadai) decides to abdicate and divide his realm between his three sons, but as in the original, it's a disastrous move. *Ran* means 'chaos', and that's just what Kurosawa unleashes – but meticulously orchestrated chaos, as armies bearing windswept banners wheel and clash, and images of death and desolation overwhelm the senses. Even though the 75-year-old director's eyesight was starting to fail, his instinct for visual composition was unsurpassed. This was the most expensive Japanese production ever – and it looks it. **PK**

INTOLERANCE 1916

Four-way stretch...

44 Whatever movie-pioneer D.W. Griffith's faults – sentimentality, racism, whatever – you can't deny the man's towering ambition. Having rung box-office tills with his Civil War epic *Birth Of A Nation*, he coolly aimed even bigger. *Intolerance*, running nearly three hours, tells not one story but four, recounting 'Love's Struggle Through the Ages' against the forces of hatred and – oh yes – intolerance. So we get the Fall of Babylon (532 BC), the Crucifixion of Christ (33 AD), the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (French Protestants slaughtered by Catholics, 1572) and a modern-day melodrama, *The Mother and the Law*. And not even told sequentially, but intercut one with another in multiple sections. No wonder it confused the hell out of contemporary audiences. These days we can take that in our stride, but there's a loopy grandeur about it that still compels. **PK**

**SIN CITY 2005***You're gonna love this, baby.*

45 Easily amongst the greatest comic strip adaptations of all time and as near to a moving comic as any movie has ever been, Robert Rodriguez's balls-out adaptation of Frank Miller's neo-noir graphic novel looks like nothing else committed to screen. With an all-star cast, Rodriguez filmed the entire movie against greenscreen, and (mostly) in black and white. With its computer-generated backdrops and bleached-out visuals, *Sin City* creates its own cinematic world, a rain-drenched one populated by femme fatales, hit men, mobsters and child killers.

Hardly anyone in *Sin City* is likeable, and barely anyone registers as a real human being, but that's not the point – it's a celebration of pulp, of dime-store detective fiction, as throwaway as a Twinkies wrapper. And 16 years on from its release, it's still unique. **S'OB**

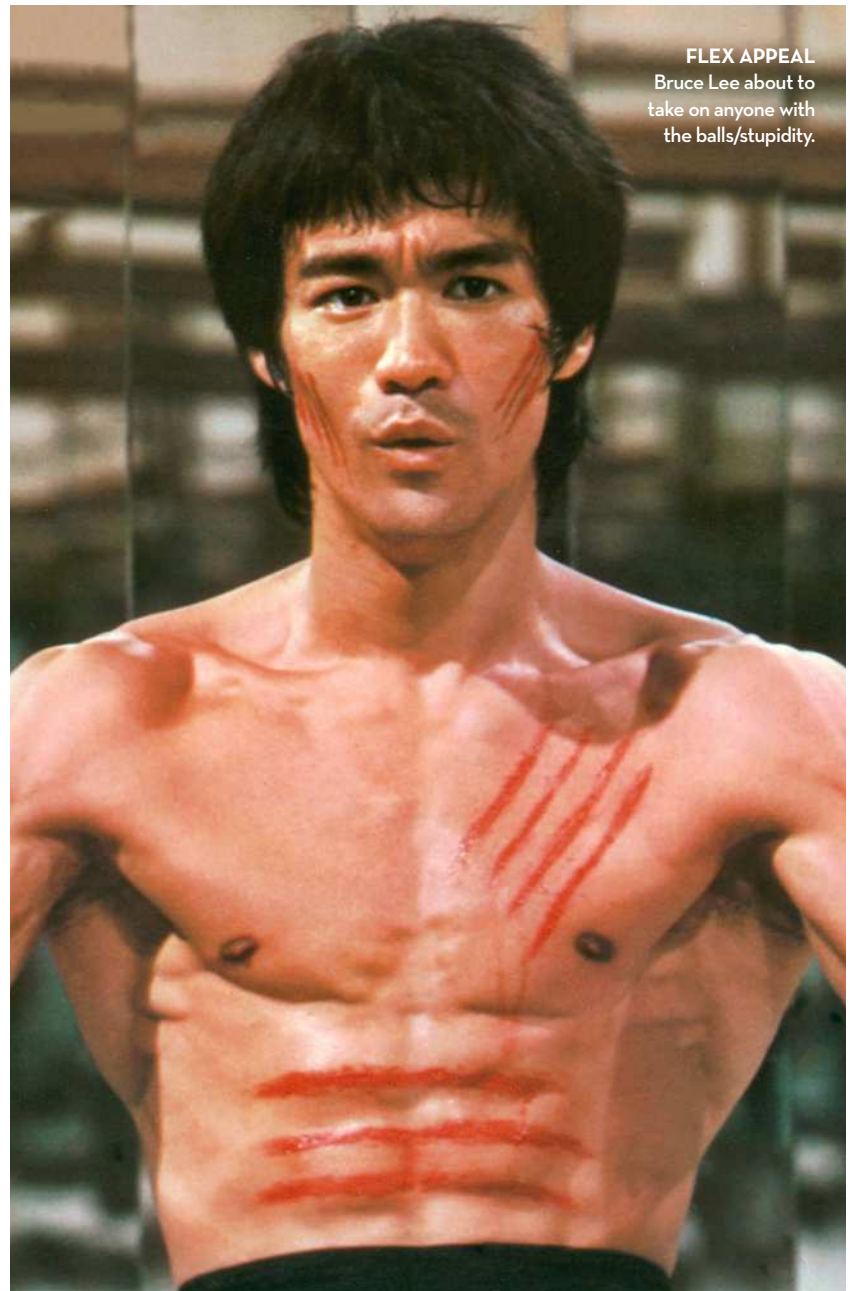
THE RIGHT STUFF 1986*Space is the place.*

46 Were the first astronauts of the American space program pioneers or simply dupes of a government propaganda machine? It would have been easy to ignore the delicious ambiguity of Tom Wolfe's acclaimed novel in this strapping big-screen adaptation, to deliver a soft-lensed and patriot-flavoured tribute to that first space pack. But despite being made in the era of Ronald Reagan, *The Right Stuff* doesn't sugar coat them or their accomplishments.

Beginning with the sound barrier achievements of Chuck Yeager, the movie then moves on to the training of the seven astronauts picked for Project Mercury, the first manned spaceflight by the United States. The movie is admirably unflinching in its depiction of the punishing training these astronauts endured, yet it also has poetry in its heart. **S'OB**

ENTER THE DRAGON 1973*Hollywood meets Hong Kong.*

47 Without question the most famous martial arts movie of all time. Bruce Lee is a Shaolin master lured to a competition, only to discover that it is being run by the criminal Mr. Han (Shih Kien), leading to all manner of fleet-footed action as Lee takes down Han and his army. The first martial arts film co-produced by Hong Kong and Hollywood, it was a major event that should have been a breakthrough role for Lee (who had already made an impressive slew of pictures). Tragically, while *Dragon* did raise his profile, it also proved to be his final completed film. Lee died of a cerebral edema while recording an ADR session for the film. The film was released six days later and went on to be one of the biggest films of the year, pulling in a tidy \$21m in North America alone. **WS**



FLEX APPEAL
Bruce Lee about to take on anyone with the balls/stupidity.

THREE KINGS 1999

No gold, frankincense or myrrh here.

48 David O. Russell had a difficult time making *Three Kings*. As an indie director making his first major studio movie, utilising a far bigger budget that he'd previously had access to, he was under a lot of pressure. So much so that he came to blows with his leading man. Russell and George Clooney both admit to rumours of an onset scrap between director and star (though they disagree on the circumstances). Yet, somehow, despite the drama, it resulted in one of 1999's finest. Set during the Persian Gulf War, *Three Kings* follows a group of soldiers who find a treasure map, leading them to conduct a gold heist during the 1991 Iraqi uprising against Saddam Hussein.

Masterfully mixing comedy, drama and action, David O. Russell doubled his budget at the box office, and announced himself as a major talent. **SA**

SOLDIER SOLDIER SOLDIER

Wahlberg, Clooney and, er, Cube go on a different sort of foreign excursion.



BATMAN BEGINS 2005

Rise of the Dark Knight.

49 Stripping away the cartoon pomp that had become associated with the character, *Batman Begins* is perhaps the first Dark Knight film to really cut deep into what makes Batman so fascinating. A slow-burn character drama wrapped in a vigilante crime tale which just so happens to deal with a man in a cape, Christopher Nolan's purposeful direction is lit up by pitch-perfect ensemble performances across the whole spread of its dream cast. Anchored by the deeply affectionate proxy father-son relationship between Michael Caine's Alfred and Christian Bale's Bruce Wayne, and supported by Gary Oldman as Jim Gordon, *Batman Begins* allows its villains – chiefly Cillian Murphy's Scarecrow – to threaten on a personal and emotional level, beyond that of their criminal machinations. **DH**



CROSS OF IRON 1977

Good German vs bad German...

50 Sam Peckinpah's only war movie is set on the Eastern Front in 1943, with the German troops already starting to crumble before the Red Army onslaught. James Coburn's a maverick sergeant, a man who loathes and despises war but despite himself is very good at it; Maximilian Schell is his diametric opposite, an arrogant Prussian officer looking to gain the titular decoration by putting others, rather than himself, in danger. Their colonel, played by James Mason, resignedly knows that defeat is looming and all the slaughter that's coming will be futile. Peckinpah deliberately drains his film of the least hint of glory or heroism, or even of colour – this is war as a grim, grimy slog, with the focus on mud and flying debris, the sombre detritus of dug-in warfare. By setting his story on the German side, he emphasises the universality of war at its most dehumanising. **PK**

PATHS OF GLORY 1957

Kubrick's early classic.

51 Stanley Kubrick's first major Hollywood movie, *The Killing*, was a box office flop. Luckily, it was a critical success – making many reviewers' end-of-year top 10 lists – allowing Kubrick's career to continue with *Paths Of Glory*, his first true masterpiece. Based on the novel by Humphrey Cobb, *Glory* tells the story of Colonel Dax (Kirk Douglas), the commanding officer of a company of French soldiers, who refuses to follow a suicidal order to attack. Dax finds himself having to defend his men from a cowardice charge in a subsequent court-martial.

Special for several reasons – not least the evolution of Kubrick's signature style, with some beautiful camera movements used to express the ugliness of war – what makes *Paths Of Glory* truly great is the astonishing story, packed with tension and emotion. **SA**

HAND IN GLOVE
Sylvester Stallone
as the pugilist in the
first and best film.

ROCKY 1976

Punch drunk love.

52 Before the series doubled-down on its more ludicrous tendencies (robot butlers – *Rocky IV* we’re looking at you...) came this simple, stripped down tale of a hard-up boxer fighting his way to glory. Sylvester Stallone penned the screenplay and took the lead role, bringing a genuine warmth and charm to the role. The fights thrill – particularly the climactic battle with Apollo Creed (unknowingly sowing the seeds for last year’s excellent *Creed* spin-off), but this is as much the story of Rocky’s romance with Adrian (Talia Shire) as it is a rags to riches tale, and a paean to working hard and taking everything the world has to throw at you in your stride. **WS**



FIRAE POWER
Douglas and Turner: the
'80s Bogart and Bacall?

ROMANCING THE STONE 1984

Jewel quest.

53 What do you get if you cross *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* with 1950s screwball comedy romps? This loveable adventure is the answer. Michael Douglas' Jack T Colton is a rogueish exotic bird smuggler, while Kathleen Turner's Joan Wilder is a romance novelist, ironically down on her luck when it comes to love. Together the two set off on the trail of a missing jewel, but fall foul of Danny DeVito's Ralph and Manuel Ojeda's Colonel Zolo.

It's hardly going to give Bond a run for its money in the action stakes, but Turner and Douglas have bags of charm, and it neatly subverts a few gender clichés along the way. A sequel, *The Jewel Of The Nile*, followed in 1985 and was almost as enjoyable. The proposed third film, however, never made it past the development stages. Charming, sweet, and often genuinely funny, *Romancing The Stone* deserves your time. **WS**



ONG BAK 2003

All the right moves...

54 When thieves steal the head of a Buddha statue in northeastern Thailand, villager Ting (Tony Jaa) heads to Bangkok in pursuit, encountering drug dealers, thugs and underground fighters. The plot is negligible, the humour goofy, but Jaa is a human weapon and there is no overstating the impact of his full-contact Muay Thai moves – not since Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan exploded onto screens in the early '70s has a martial artist so blown minds. Eagle-eyed viewers might spy the graffiti “Hi Steven Spielberg, let to it together” [sic] during one chase, and it seemed certain Jaa would rule Hollywood. Instead he refused to play bad guys, stayed in Thailand to make *Ong Bak 2* and *3*, and, in 2010, became a Buddhist monk. When he did go west, he was wasted in *Furious 7*, but got a little more to do in *xx: The Return Of Xander Cage*. **JG**

SPEED 1994

Don't slow down...

55 The *Speed* franchise might not have made it to a trilogy, but fans shouldn't mind too much – the first film is so good it feels like three films in one, with each act containing its own, very individual, action set-piece. Apparently, when director Jan de Bont was first presented with the script, his reaction to hearing about a film set almost entirely on a bus was: “That's going to be boring.”

How wrong he was. But it's not just the concept of a bomb on a bus that makes *Speed* so successful. More often than not, the dialogue is as thrilling as the explosions. That's thanks to an uncredited rewrite by Joss Whedon, who, according to credited writer Graham Yost, wrote 99 per cent of the dialogue. Add that to Keanu Reeves' insistence on doing 90 per cent of the stunts, and you've got a constantly entertaining experience. **SA**

MAD MAX 2: THE ROAD WARRIOR 1981

Roaring back to life.

56 This post-apocalyptic masterpiece is so radically different from its low-budget forebear, Warner Brothers originally released it in cinemas as merely *The Road Warrior*, dropping the whole *Mad Max* thing from its advertising entirely. It was a smart move. Not only did it give great box office returns, it allowed them to re-release the original as a prequel! But we have a feeling, however it had been released, *Mad Max 2* would have been a success. High on action, low on dialogue, this fast-paced and violent sci-fi flick feels like a comic come to life.

Its bondage-influenced costume design and dystopian tone changed the SF genre instantly, inspiring a whole library of rip-off movies across the world. But none are as perfect as the petrol-soaked original, whatever name it goes by. **SA**

LETHAL WEAPON 1987

Bad-ass buddy action.

57 The increasingly frivolous sequels have dulled our memory of how dark and tough Richard Donner's 1987 original was. Remember that the *Lethal Weapon* of the title referred not to firearms, but to Martin Riggs, a former Special Forces soldier with a dead ex-wife, a Three Stooges fixation and a death wish. Riggs in the first film is almost certifiable.

Shane Black's mismatched cops template has been much copied over the years, not least by himself, but Mel Gibson and Danny Glover's spirited performances help make *Lethal Weapon* one of the best in an overcrowded genre.

Unlike the three follow-ons there's a nastiness to the first film. The sequence where Gary Busey tortures Riggs with electric shots is brutal, while Riggs' mania gives Mel Gibson some proper, clear-the-room-please acting to do. It's just a shame about the mullet. **S'OB**

SKYFALL 2012

Bond's golden anniversary.

58 As the 50th anniversary Bond adventure there was more than a little riding on *Skyfall* – especially following the disappointment of the brief, flimsy second Craig movie, *Quantum Of Solace*. Thankfully, *Skyfall* more than succeeded in its mission. Epic in scope, it attempts to inject a little of the old Bond wit and silliness back into the Craig era. It's miles away from *Die Another Day*'s invisible cars, but with its abandoned islands, man-eating Komodo Dragons and elaborate opening train chase, it brings a welcome dose of fun. Then, just as you think you have the measure of the movie, it switches gear, for a final act that's more *Straw Dogs* than *The Spy Who Loved Me*, with 007 and M trapped in Bond's ancestral home in Scotland, facing the sadistic Silva – a Donald Trump-haired Javier Bardem sitting comfortably in the top tier of Bond villains. **WS**

SEA POWER

The Americans about to fight them on the beaches.



SAVING PRIVATE RYAN 1998

Hanks for the memories.

59 It's probably for the best that few Hollywood blockbusters since Steven Spielberg's Oscar winner have managed to capture the unadulterated horrors of war.

His unflinching portrayal of the Omaha Beach landings is one of the defining moments of modern cinema, with men picking up lost limbs and running with them as the sand turns red with blood, while Tom Hanks' shellshocked Captain Miller looks on.

The story that follows is no less harrowing, but it is also life-affirming

as a US army unit journeys through France to find the one surviving son (Matt Damon) of a mother who has lost three others. As a war story it's unrelenting, but exceptional performances from Hanks and his fellow unit members make this a must-see masterwork from a director already at the very top of his game. **LB**

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 1996

Choose to accept it...

60 *Mission: Impossible* takes the best thing about the knockabout '60s spy series (the theme tune) and ditches pretty much everything else. Brian De Palma's first in the never-ending action franchise is a knotty, explosive espionage caper that refuses to compromise on plot.

There are double agents, shocks, and silly dressing-up galore. Pelting gloriously and audaciously across a labyrinthine narrative of duplicity and betrayal, Tom Cruise holds it all together. The film that started the star on his own impossible mission to do away with stuntmen, here he's slap bang in the middle of everything the film can throw at him, from exploding fish tanks to a train-roof tussle; his most memorable moment comes in the tense wire-suspended infiltration scene. Go on this mission, now. **MH**



MAKING A SPLASH
Impossible is nothing to
Tom Cruise's Ethan Hunt.

KILL BILL VOLS 1 AND 2 2003-2004

Vengeance is fine.

61 Still the high-point of Quentin Tarantino's later, cartoonier period, *Kill Bill* is a rapid-fire playlist of all of the director's greatest talents and conceits. Affectionate pastiche of older, under-appreciated genre cinema? Check. Ludicrous spread of film-geek influences, from super-specific martial arts shows and stars, to a full-blown anime sequence? Check. But crucial is Tarantino's ability not just to imitate, but to recontextualise, turning the quaint into the fresh and spectacular. You'll know the film best for the truly epic House of Blue Leaves fight, but there's much more to savour besides. The nuanced relationship between Uma Thurman's Bride and David Carradine's titular Bill; the ensemble of worn-down assassin adversaries, each fulfilling a winsome stereotype, but infusing it with humanity. **DH**

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE 1963

Spy games.

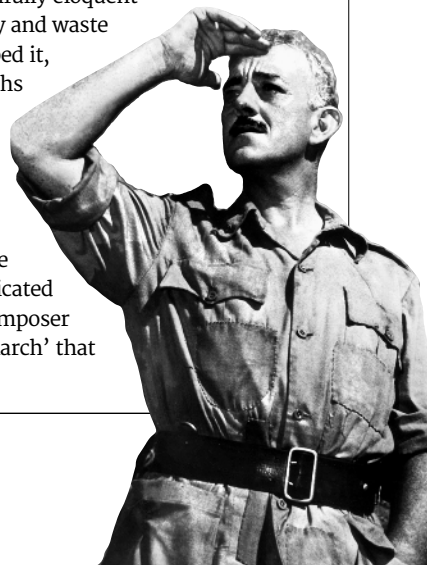
62 Rushed into production following the success of *Dr. No*, James Bond's second cinematic outing is often considered one of his very finest. Following JFK's personal endorsement of the novel, the team take the literary source material at virtually face value. Marginally less bombastic than its immediate forebear, this Cold War thriller nevertheless establishes further elements of the Bondian tropes (*SPECTRE*, pre-credit sequence, gadgets, Q), whilst chancing its arm at a little Hitchcockian adventuring. Tasked with the act of accompanying a defecting Russian spy and code machine back to Blighty, the secret agent wouldn't have such streamlined missions for decades.

From Matt Monro's silky vocals to the beautiful European vistas to *that* train fight, the film drips with classy elegance and tailored cool. **MH**

THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI 1957

Lean puts on weight...

63 *Kwai* is a study in obsession to the point of madness. We're in a Japanese WW2 POW camp where British prisoners are forced to build a railway. The Brit CO, Col Nicholson (Alec Guinness), sees the building of the titular bridge as a morale booster for his men – blind to the aid it'll provide to the Japanese. "A painfully eloquent statement of the ... folly and waste of war," as Lean described it, the movie took 16 months to shoot but reaped a stack of Oscars, including one for Lean. Another went to Malcolm Arnold for his stirring score, though he should maybe have dedicated it to Kenneth Alford, composer of the 'Colonel Bogey March' that became such a hit. **PK**



POINT MADE

Sigourney Weaver's Ripley multi-tasks with aplomb.

ALIENS 1986

War has never been so much fun.

64 Ridley Scott's original *Alien* was, like its titular xenomorph, precision-engineered. A deep space shocker that changed horror cinema forever (sci-fi too, for that matter), it was always going to be a tough act to follow. Enter James Cameron and a drop ship full of marines. *Aliens* reinvents the saga as a high-octane war movie. At the same time, the theme of family is vital to the film. We learn more about Ripley, notably that she had a daughter, now lost to time following Ellen's 57 years adrift in deep space. But while investigating the disappearance of the colonists on LV-426 Ripley meets Newt and plucky Lt. Hicks and you see the ice start to thaw and a new family unit form.

Bombastic, long (especially the Special Edition cut), but always thrilling, action SF doesn't get better than this. **WS**



THE HURT LOCKER 2008

Bombs away.

65 Before he was Marvel's Hawkeye, Jeremy Renner shot into view of the Academy with his performance as Staff Sergeant William James, a bomb disposal expert serving in Iraq. *The Hurt Locker*, from *Zero Dark Thirty* director Kathryn Bigelow, is one of the few movies that has managed to take on the conflict with confidence and focuses solely on its effect on the lives of the individuals on the ground.

Every shot is heart-in-throat stuff as the unit delves deeper into war-torn Baghdad. Bigelow's handheld camera approach makes each scene an expert exercise in tension as James and his colleagues work, literally, to defuse each situation. Renner's James is a loose cannon but ultimately one that's necessary for the war. The message is suitably bleak but ultimately utterly compelling. **LB**



LEADING THE CHARGE
Jeremy Renner risks life and limb in war-torn Iraq.

KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE 2014

Kick ass spy caper.

66 Doing for the spy film what *Kick-Ass* did for superheroes – deconstructing every trope to a self-effacing level, while also paying it full tribute – *Kingsman* is also an optimistic look at modern Britain. Adopted into secret agent mentorship by Colin Firth's effortlessly charming Galahad, Eggsy (Taron Egerton) is a kid with a big heart, held back by his roots. Naturally, there's a megalomaniac with sinister global intent to deal with, but really, amid all of its cartoonish action and gleefully bloody violence, *Kingsman* is a film about personal growth, about potential over limitations, and about self-belief amplified by the belief of others. You'll come for the sight of Colin Firth going full-Rambo, but you'll leave with hope in your heart. **DH**



DRUNKEN MASTER II 1994

Chan on the run.

67 Jackie Chan may be predominantly known for his patchy Hollywood career these days, but let's not forget just how wildly talented he is as a physical actor. Lar Kar-leung and Chan co-directed this belated sequel (the original was released in 1978), also known as *The Legend Of Drunken Master*. Rebooting the storyline rather than following on from the original, this is a masterclass in dazzlingly inventive action as Chan's Wong Fei-hung gets embroiled in a mix up over some ginseng and a stolen Chinese antique that forces him to punch, kick and dodge his way out of trouble. Originally released in 1994 and instantly hailed a classic, it didn't get US distribution until 2000. It was worth the wait. *Drunken Master II* is not just a great martial arts movie, it's an all-time action classic. **WS**

THE DIRTY DOZEN 1967

Take one for the team...

68 Tensions between an ill-assorted group in a tough situation were something of a Robert Aldrich speciality (think *Flight Of The Phoenix* and *Twilight's Last Gleaming*) and the groups didn't come much more ill-assorted than in his biggest box-office hit, *The Dirty Dozen*. Lee Marvin's the US army major who recruits a band of death-row prisoners – thugs, rapists and murderers – for a suicide mission into enemy territory to assassinate high-ranking German Wehrmacht officers in a French chateau. Some of Hollywood's finest heavies make up the cast: besides Marvin we get Ernest Borgnine, Charles Bronson, Robert Ryan and, early in his career, Donald Sutherland. Aldrich's trademark cynicism is well to the fore; the humour is ultra-black, the violence is extreme and unremitting, and the Americans exhibit no more scruples than the Germans. **PK**



THE SEARCHERS 1956

Ford's masterpiece still impresses.

69 John Ford directed many Westerns but none are as celebrated as *The Searchers*. Set during the Texas-Indian Wars, the movie headlines regular Ford cohort John Wayne as Civil War veteran, Ethan Edwards, who spends five years searching for his abducted niece.

The Searchers is a masterfully made movie, but has courted controversy these past few decades for the unrepentant racism of its lead character. The controversy, however, misses the point that the movie never condones Ethan's bigotry. He's a man consumed by bitterness. He's not a hero, but someone for whom hatred and revenge have become part of his DNA.

The Searchers' influence runs deep in American cinema. *Lawrence Of Arabia* and *Star Wars* all owe a debt to Ford's masterpiece, while it's also the favourite movie of one Martin Scorsese. **S'OB**

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST 1968

A true widescreen epic.

70 Sergio Leone had been gearing up for this one his entire life. There had always been a muscular element of the operatic in the Spaghetti Western movies of the Italian-born director, and that love of the purely visual reached its apotheosis in *Once Upon A Time In The West*.

With a more authentically American cast than his previous Spaghetthis, the movie plays like a greatest hits of the genre – there are references to *High Noon*, *The Iron Horse*, *The Searchers* and *Shane*, but given a uniquely Italian twist.

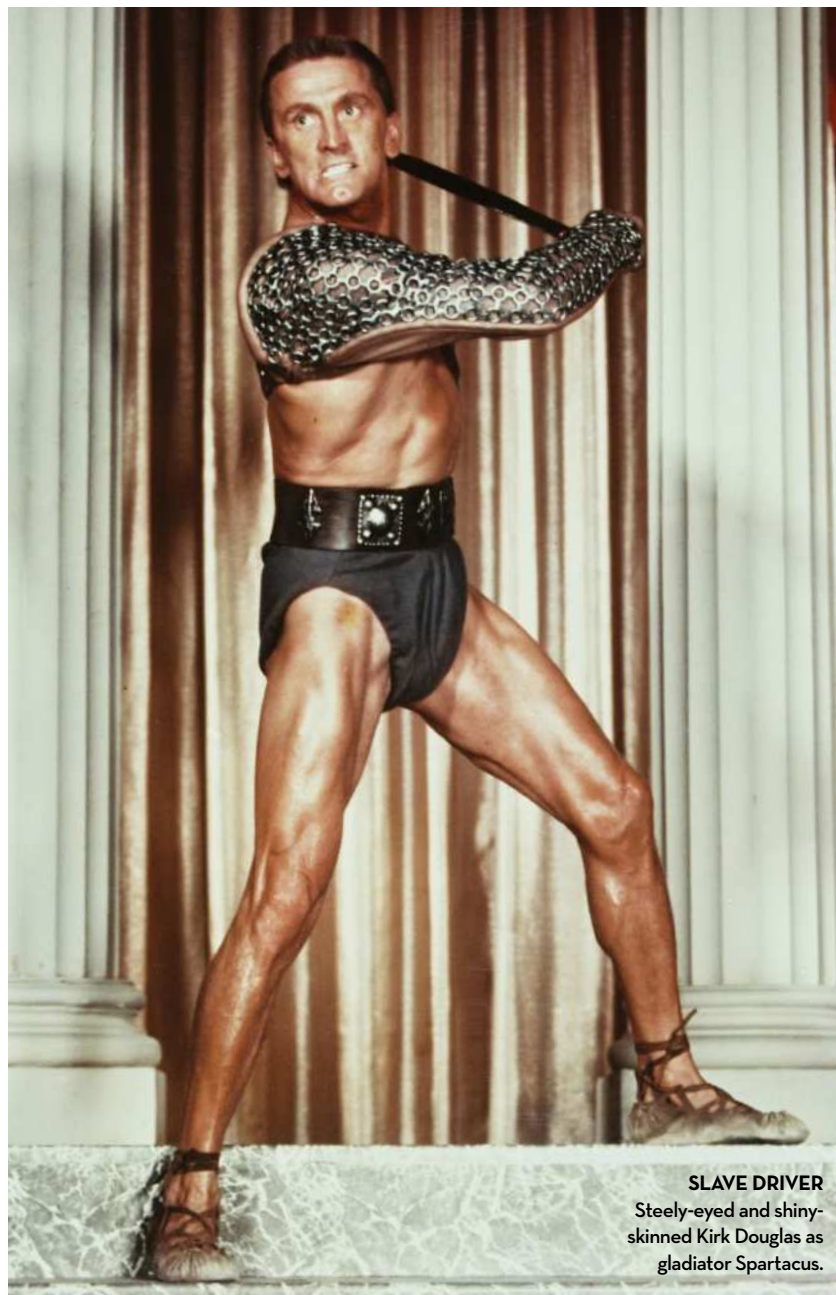
Henry Fonda, cast against type as the cold-eyed killer Frank, is chillingly convincing, but the real stars of the movie are composer Ennio Morricone's score and cameraman Tonino Delli Colli's crisp 35mm cinematography. It's nearly three hours long, but rarely has a movie been so perfectly paced. **S'OB**

SPARTACUS 1960

Swords, sandals and Stanley.

71 Given the level of controversy around *Spartacus*, it's amazing that we're celebrating it as a good film, let alone a great one. Its original director, Anthony Mann, was fired after just a week of shooting and replacement director Stanley Kubrick had a rocky relationship with producer and star Kirk Douglas (it's the only film on Kubrick's CV where he didn't have final cut).

But *Spartacus* is a remarkable movie, with an electrifying central performance by Kirk Douglas as the Roman slave intent on overthrowing his cowardly masters. And the famous moment where the recaptured slaves are asked to identify Spartacus in exchange for leniency and each in turn instead proclaims "I'm Spartacus!" remains one of cinema's all-time greatest scenes. **S'OB**



SLAVE DRIVER
Steely-eyed and shiny-skinned Kirk Douglas as gladiator Spartacus.



OUTNUMBERED
Michael Caine helps
to fend off the
Zulu advance.

ZULU 1964

It's a miracle.

72 *Zulu* tells the true story of the 1870 Battle of Rorke's Drift in South Africa, an infamous clash which saw 150 British soldiers fighting off 4,000 Zulu warriors.

The cast is a roll call of 1960s acting talent. Stanley Baker (who also co-produced) has the necessary gravitas as Lieutenant John Chard. Michael Caine, in his first major role, is Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead, and Jack Hawkins performs a star turn as the doom-mongering Reverend Otto Witt, all bookended with a Richard Burton voiceover.

The battle scene, naturally, is at the heart of *Zulu*. It's so authentic you can almost smell the soldiers' sweat as they fight. Best watched on a rainy Sunday afternoon when you have the time to luxuriate in this epic slice of film making. **DF**



POINT BREAK 1991

New-wave action.

73 Forget Ericson Core's charmless remake – it's Kathryn Bigelow's 1991 movie that provides the real adrenalin shot, as Keanu Reeves' hotshot FBI agent Johnny Utah goes deep undercover (he learns to surf, brah) to bring down a gang of bank-robbing crims led by Patrick Swayze's Zen-warrior Bodhi. Bigelow, already a proven director of smart genre thrillers with *Blue Steel* and *Near Dark*, here marries ballistic, hand-held action sequences with a subversive streak that teases out the homoeroticism implicit in action-movie bromances – you're never sure if Utah wants to fight, fuck or frame Bodhi. Opening to mixed reviews and good-not-great box office, *Point Break*'s reputation has deservedly grown since. In fact, it's so good that it's hard to imagine the team-up originally touted – Ridley Scott directing, Johnny Depp starring – could have matched it. **JG**

ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE 1969

A model performance.

74 The best 007 movie? That's what many Bond fans believe. With Sean Connery having said ta-ra, Aussie model George Lazenby was parachuted in as the new 007. He gets a bad rap now, but look again at his only James Bond film and he acquits himself just fine as Ian Fleming's ladykilling secret agent.

This was also the only Bond film to be directed by former editor Peter R Hunt, and it turns out, against the odds, to be a heaven-sent pairing. Never had a Bond movie looked so lush as *OHMSS* (sometimes it almost feels as if it's Hitchcock behind the camera) and rarely had a Bond script asked so much of its leading actor. A model with limited acting experience he may have been, but Lazenby is magnificent in the emotionally devastating final scene, as his new wife lays dead in his arms. **S'OB**

THE THIN RED LINE 1998

Every man fights his own war...

75 Any Terrence Malick movie is a major event, but *The Thin Red Line*'s impact was seismic. It was the reclusive director's first film for 20 years, boasting an epic array of talented actors – with Sean Penn, Adrien Brody, George Clooney, John C Reilly, and John Travolta being boldly advertised on the poster, amongst many more.

We're not sure if the A-list cast was attracted to the project because of Malick's reputation, or the beautiful, lyrical script, which combines a raw exploration of war with philosophical musings on the meaning of life. But whatever the reason, every element combined to create one of the most poetic war movies ever made. Ostensibly an adaptation of James Jones' autobiographical 1962 novel, about the conflict at Guadalcanal during World War 2, it transcended its source to create a truly unique cinema experience. **SA**

THE GREAT ESCAPE 1963

Ride of the Cooler King.

76 It's quite a feat to make a movie about the incarceration of 11,000 POWs – and the murder of 50 of them – so goddamned entertaining that it's become a staple of Bank Holiday afternoon schedules. But despite its grim subject matter, *The Great Escape* is an almost criminally pleasurable watch.

The true definition of an ensemble movie, it's chock with starry A-listers and trusty dependable character actors, from Steve McQueen and Richard Attenborough to James Garner and David McCallum, all starring as the real-life prisoners of Stalag Luft III, the supposedly jailbreak-proof prisoner-of-war camp set up by the Nazis in 1942.

The movie boasts far too many memorable moments to list here, but the most iconic must be Steve McQueen's heroic break for it on a 650 Triumph motorcycle across the German countryside. **S'OB**

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA 1962

Sweeping historical epic.

77 David Lean made his directorial name with a succession of small-scale and very British, dramas that barely registered on the global box office. But his reinvention as a director of grand Cinemascope epics, starting with 1957's *The Bridge On The River Kwai*, made him one of the world's most admired filmmakers. This stunningly photographed drama about TE Lawrence – archaeologist, officer, diplomat – is his crowning glory.

Peter O'Toole, who is glittering as the enigmatic Lawrence, is joined by Lean regular Alec Guinness, '60s hunkthrob Omar Sharif and Brit stalwart Jack Hawkins. But it's the eye-wowing widescreen visuals that the film is justly remembered for. It's still the go-to movie for home cinema enthusiasts who want to show off their mammoth new telly. **S'OB**

ROBOT WARS

The T-1000: a new and even deadlier type of cyborg.

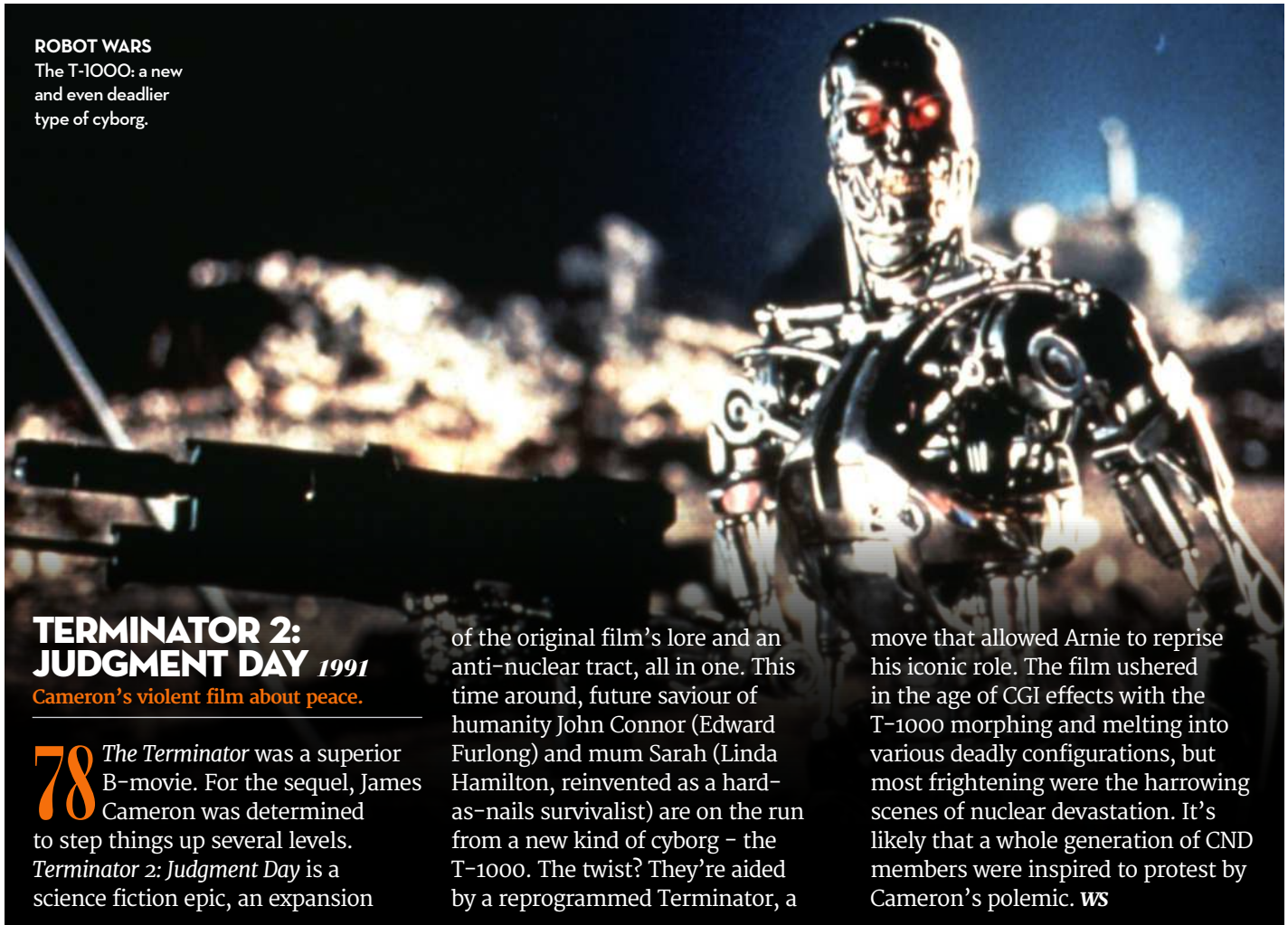
TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY 1991

Cameron's violent film about peace.

78 *The Terminator* was a superior B-movie. For the sequel, James Cameron was determined to step things up several levels. *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* is a science fiction epic, an expansion

of the original film's lore and an anti-nuclear tract, all in one. This time around, future saviour of humanity John Connor (Edward Furlong) and mum Sarah (Linda Hamilton, reinvented as a hard-as-nails survivalist) are on the run from a new kind of cyborg – the T-1000. The twist? They're aided by a reprogrammed Terminator, a

move that allowed Arnie to reprise his iconic role. The film ushered in the age of CGI effects with the T-1000 morphing and melting into various deadly configurations, but most frightening were the harrowing scenes of nuclear devastation. It's likely that a whole generation of CND members were inspired to protest by Cameron's polemic. **WS**



MAD MAX: FURY ROAD 2015

Drive hard.

79 Surely the most ruthlessly edited movie ever made, George Miller's vibrant burst of adrenalin and gasoline bludgeons its audience senselessly, not daring to put its foot on the brakes once.

In a dystopian desert, despotic lunatic Immortan Joe runs both the water and petrol supply and breeds babies against the mothers' will. Whilst escaping his slavery, Charlize Theron's shaven-headed Imperator Furiosa teams up with Max (Tom Hardy) for a road trip in which The Highway Code is ignored in the most spectacularly brutal fashion.

Exquisite photography, with breathtaking stunts, design, and imagination throughout, *Fury Road* wrings every last ounce of spectacle cinema has to offer, and then squeezes some more just for good measure. **MH**

ROAD RAGE
Tom Hardy drives
up a desert storm.



DIE HARD 1988

"Yippie-Ki-Yay!"

80 *Die Hard* might have bullets, beatdowns and the odd barefoot stunt, but the reason it's so perennially popular is that it has bagfuls of character.

Smart in its simplicity, John McTiernan's skyscraper scrapper is given an extra charm boost by Bruce Willis' John McClane.

An odds-fightin' hero taking down terrorists with guile, wit, and improvisation, Willis' embittered but sardonic role set the mould for a thousand copycat movie protagonists to come.

With no fat at all on its pacey running time, a fantastic sense of location, and Michael Kamen's peerless score, *Die Hard* lives on. **MH**

RUNAWAY TRAIN 1985

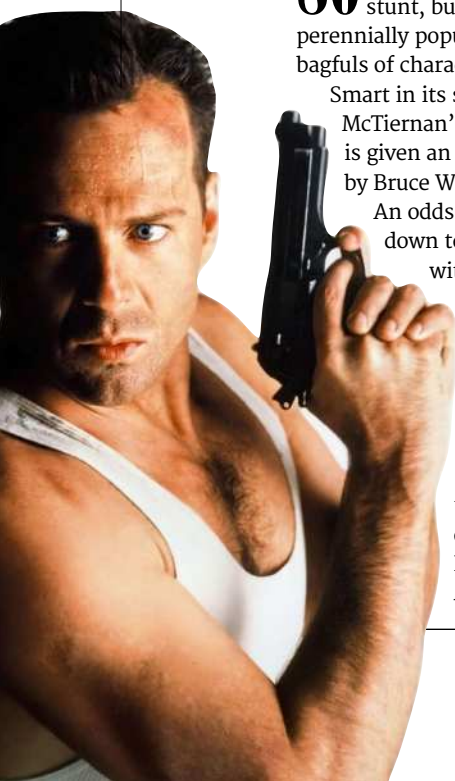
Off the rails action.

81 Directed by Andrei Konchalovsky, from a script by Akira Kurosawa, *Runaway Train* is a resonant take on the prison break movie. Densely atmospheric and eventually as fatalistic as it is coldly beautiful, it tells the story of Manny, a bank robber and attempted prison escapee making his third bid to bust out of a maximum security unit. Between him and freedom lies the Alaskan wilderness and the titular train. Behind him, the authorities, and a grudge almost as out-of-control as Manny himself. For all the disaster movie action as Manny barrels through the empty, white countryside, it's the character work that makes *Runaway Train* such an underrated classic. Built around the relationship between the obsessive Manny and the slower-witted Buck, a fellow escapee, *Runaway Train* presents career-best performances from both Jon Voight and Eric Roberts. **DH**

GOLDENEYE 1995

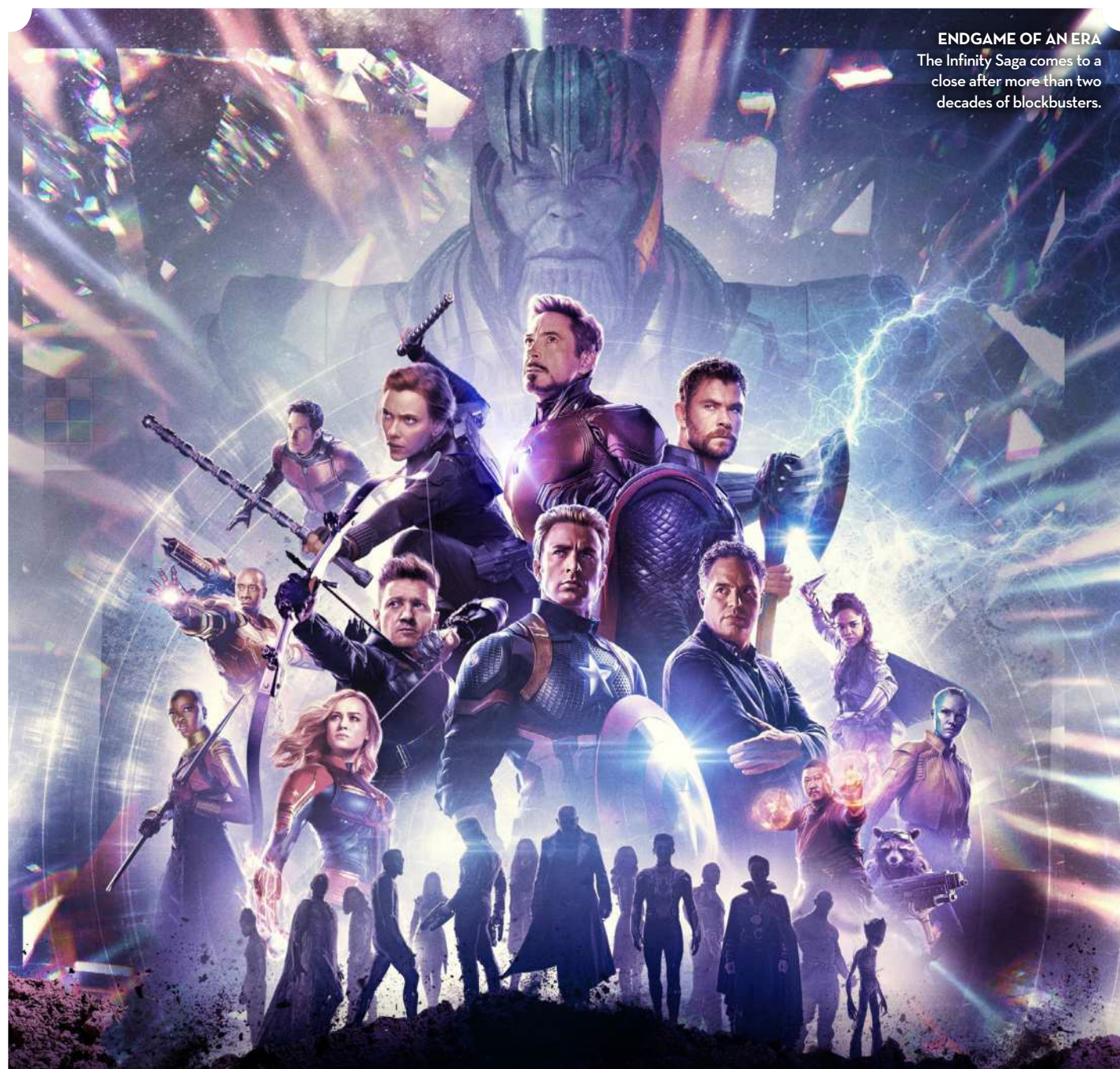
A Bond for the '90s.

82 For a while it felt like we might never see another Bond movie. Legal disputes and Timothy Dalton's resignation had led to a six-year gap between films and there was the increasingly pertinent question as to whether a spy created in 1953 was relevant in a changing world. *GoldenEye* tackles this head on. In it Bond (Pierce Brosnan imbuing the role with a winning combination of Connery's suave danger and Moore's wit) is called out as a "misogynist dinosaur, a relic of the Cold War" by M (Judi Dench), but Martin Campbell's film gives the character a new lease of life. This is a smarter, more knowing 007 – not a flawless character, but a more relatable and less troubled agent than Timothy Dalton's. It helps that, in Sean Bean's Alec Trevelyan, he's up against a worthy adversary – a dark mirror of Bond with none of his redeeming qualities. **WS**



ENDGAME OF AN ERA

The Infinity Saga comes to a close after more than two decades of blockbusters.



AVENGERS: ENDGAME 2019

Oh snap.

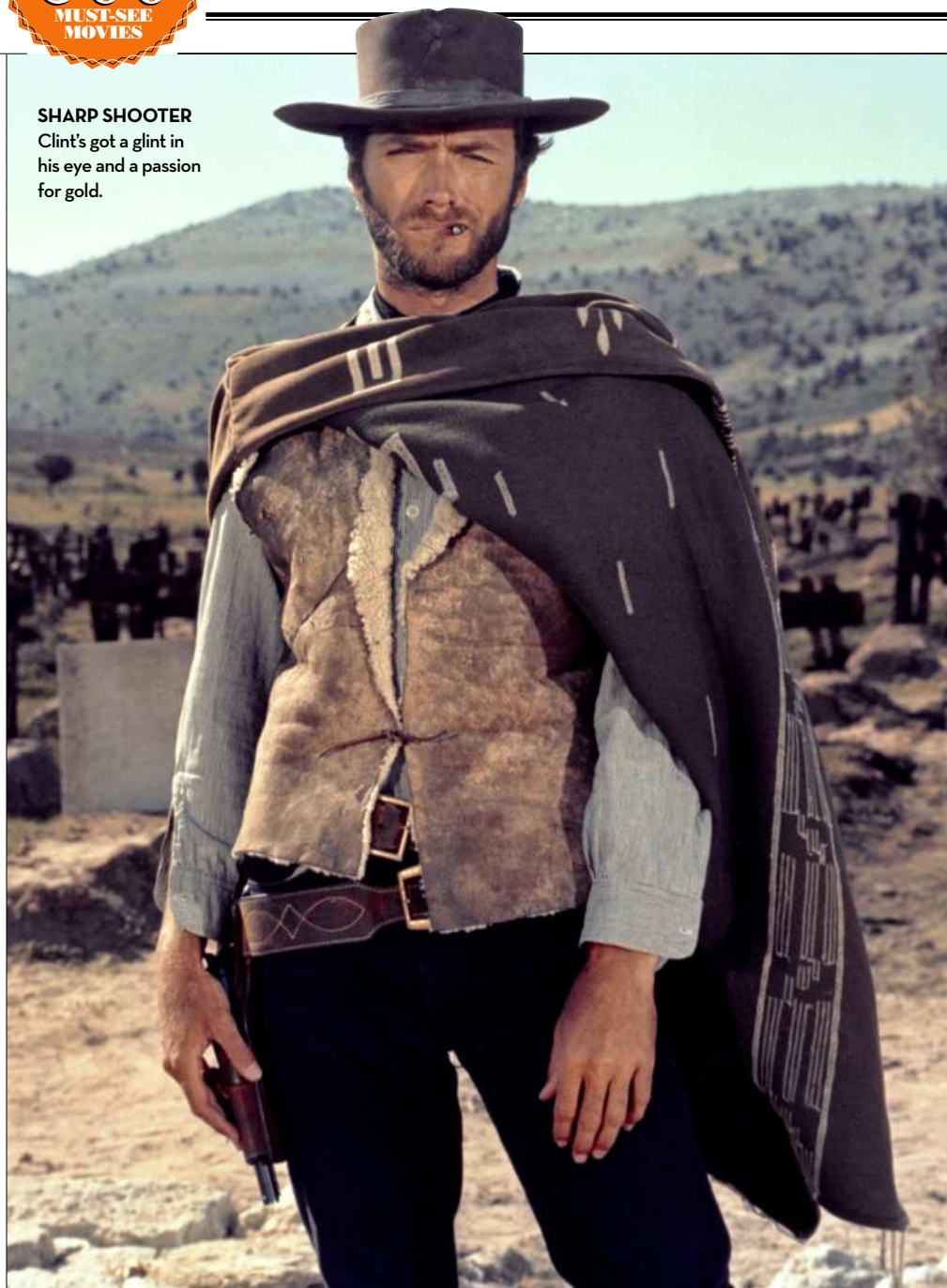
83 Briefly the highest-grossing film of all time (until *Avatar* reclaimed the crown in 2021) *Avengers: Endgame* achieved the near-

impossible by delivering a wholly satisfying conclusion to the 22-film Infinity Saga.

Set five years after 'The Snap', which wiped out half the life in the universe, the OG Avengers (Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, Black Widow, Hawkeye and Smart-Hulk) embark on a time-travelling mission through Marvel movies past to hoover up Infinity Stones and undo the Mad Titan's masterplan.

Odin help anyone who comes to *Endgame* without the accumulated knowledge of a decade's worth of MCU movies. But for those who stayed loyal, it's an overwhelmingly rewarding end-of-era victory lap with shock fates for some key players, and spectacle to spare. If you haven't seen Steve Rogers prove himself worthy and pummel giant purple thumb Thanos with Mjolnir, have you truly lived? **JF**

SHARP SHOOTER
Clint's got a glint in his eye and a passion for gold.



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY 1966

Three-way shoot-out...

84 Sergio Leone's masterstroke with the third and greatest of his spaghetti-Western *Dollars* trilogy was to set it amid the futile mass slaughter of the Civil War. The first two movies take place, as it were, once upon a time in the West – but here Leone makes his themes of treachery, murder and revenge the natural product of a society riven with senseless violence. *TGTBATU* reunites Eastwood and Van Cleef from *A Few Dollars More* – then pits the two taciturn underplayers against Eli Wallach's manic, motormouthed Tuco. And it's Wallach who steals the movie, hurling himself with gusto into his coarse, earthy role. Tuco's comic amorality shows us that in this hellbent world, goodness, badness and indeed ugliness are strictly relative. Ennio Morricone contributes his most unforgettable score, a medley of yelps, howls, electric guitars, a mournful mariachi trumpet and a haunting 'wah-wah-wah'. **PK**



SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE 2018

Raising Morales.

85 Is *Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse* the best superhero movie ever made? Our Spidey sense is tingling... Produced by Lego Movie masterminds Phil Lord (who also co-wrote) and Chris Miller, *Spider-Verse* is no ordinary outing for Marvel's webhead. For one, Peter Parker isn't the main character. Instead we're introduced to Miles Morales (Shameik Moore) and a veritable multiverse of Spider-folk, from Hailee Steinfeld's Spider-Gwen to John Mulaney's scene-stealer Spider-Ham and Jake Johnson's schlubby Peter B. Parker. Both a commentary on the merry-go-round of superhero reboots and a sincere superhero origin story, what truly makes *Spider-Verse* soar is its extraordinary animation, which mixes CGI, hand-drawn elements and comic-inspired graphic design to unique – and dazzling – effect. **JF**

GALLIPOLI 1981

Gibbo goes to war...

86 Released the same year as the Oscar-winning *Chariots Of Fire*, Peter Weir's anti-war classic sees two sprinters (Mel Gibson, Mark Lee) packed off to the World War I battlefield of Gallipoli, where Australian and New Zealand forces joined an Allied mission to control the Dardanelles waterway. The campaign was a disaster, costing the lives of thousands. Weir chose to make *Gallipoli* after visiting the battlefield en route to performing promotional duties in London for *Picnic At Hanging Rock*. He worked on an atypically large canvas for an Australian New Wave film, mounting some impressive battle scenes but keeping the focus intimate. There are images of striking beauty (white deserts, men swimming underwater as shells explode above) and it says much of Weir's intentions that the 700 extras were taught the history of each scene they were about to film. **JG**

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD 1938

He shot the sheriff...

87 Errol Flynn was never the world's greatest actor – but given the right full-blooded swashbuckling vehicle, he could be magnificent. And they don't come more full-blooded, nor with more buckling of the swashes, than Michael Curtiz's glowing Technicolor telling of the evergreen Robin Hood legend.

The whole film has an irresistible, almost operatic, sweep and panache, culminating in the final duel between Flynn's Robin and Basil Rathbone's relishably evil Guy of Gisborne, all lunging shadows on torchlit stone walls. Along with Rathbone there's Olivia De Havilland's spirited Marion, and Claude Rains' silkily malevolent King John, slyly hinting that he rather fancies Robin. Topping it all off comes the finest of Erich Wolfgang Korngold's rousing film scores – rightly awarded an Oscar. **PK**



MERRY MEN

Errol Flynn manages to look manly in tights.

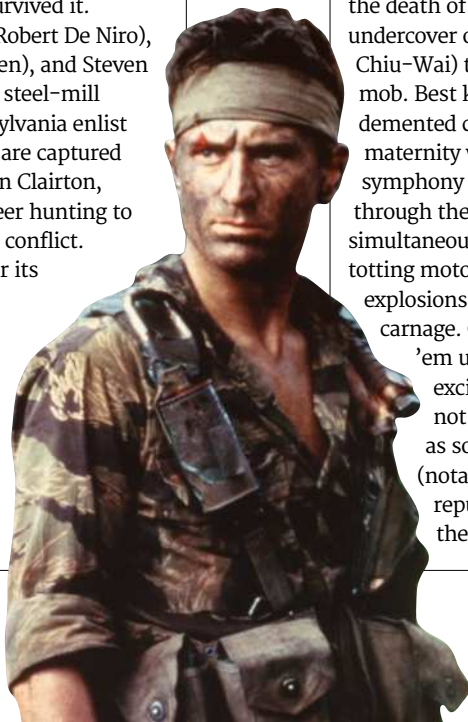
THE DEER HUNTER 1978

War stories.

88 *The Deer Hunter* came out three years after the Vietnam War ended and America was just waking up to what the conflict had done to the men who survived it.

Three friends, Mike (Robert De Niro), Nick (Christopher Walken), and Steven (John Savage), from the steel-mill town of Clairton, Pennsylvania enlist to fight in Vietnam and are captured by the Viet Cong. Back in Clairton, Mike loses himself in deer hunting to escape memories of the conflict.

Justly remembered for its heart-stoppingly tense Russian Roulette scene, *The Deer Hunter* is, for the main part, a thoughtful study in masculinity and a career high for its director, the late, great Michael Cimino. **S'OB**



HARD BOILED 1992

Bullet ballet.

89 John Woo's final film made in China is also his most explosive. Hard-ass copper "Tequila"

Yuen (Chow Yun-fat) must avenge the death of his partner and calls on undercover officer Alan (Tony Leung Chiu-Wai) to help take down the mob. Best known for its frankly demented climactic battle set in a maternity ward, it's an insane symphony of firepower (people leaping through the air while firing two guns simultaneously? Yep. Machine gun-totting motorcyclists? For sure), explosions and beautifully orchestrated carnage. Overblown? Sure. But shoot 'em ups have rarely been this exciting. The film was initially not as successful in Hong Kong as some of Woo's earlier films (notably *The Killer*), but its reputation has only grown over the years. **WS**

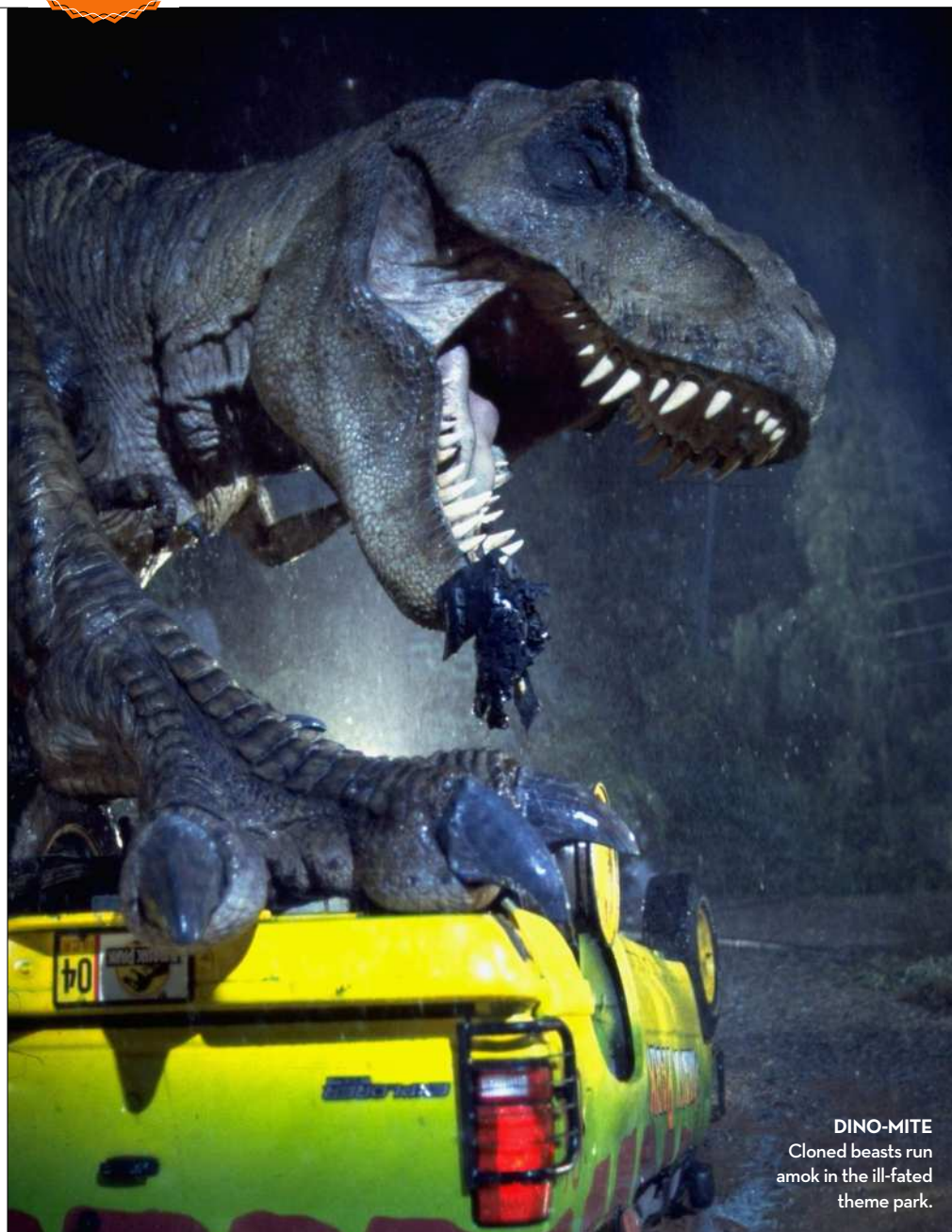
WAR 2007

Statham vs Li.

90 Less than three minutes into this film you get burning buildings, bullets aplenty, and a blowjob joke. That's value for money, folks.

Philip Atwell's noisy vengeance thriller is a bang-for-buck sensory overload. Pitting whisper-throated shooty hardnut Jason Statham against the martial arts combat of Jet Li, the simplistic premise of FBI agent vs. assassin lets loose two of the noughties' most prolific action stars in a cinematic cat-and-mouse.

As adolescent as attempting to buy booze underage and writing bad poetry, there's a relentless and reckless abandon to the action. Featuring fisticuffs, sword fights, motorbike chases and car stunts, all wrapped up in ADHD-fuelled rapid-fire editing, its swift pace makes videogames look positively patient by contrast. *War*: not necessarily hell, just supremely entertaining. **MH**



DINO-MITE
Cloned beasts run amok in the ill-fated theme park.

JURASSIC PARK 1993

Walking with dinosaurs.

91 Forget *Independence Day*. Drop *Men In Black*. *The Phantom Menace*? Puh-lease. Pretenders to the crown, all of them. There's only one true '90s blockbuster, and it was covered in scales. And no, we're not talking *Godzilla*.

Reasserting the genre template after establishing it with *Jaws* a generation earlier, Spielberg's tyrannosaurus-sized thrill ride sets new cinematic standards in how to enthrall a family audience. It does so with a clutch of likeable, dynamic characters, an isolated location, and lots of stunningly realised dinosaur effects. Not forgetting the essential splendour of John Williams' chest-tightening theme.

A crafted work that paces its thrills and awe expertly, it's rare that a blockbuster climax feels both earned and perilous. *Jurassic Park* does all that with menacing prehistoric bite. **MH**



THE WILD BUNCH 1969

Their final stand...

92 A glance down the cast list tells us where we're at: William Holden, Robert Ryan, Edmond O'Brien, Warren Oates, Ben Johnson, Ernest Borgnine – a line-up of craggy, well-loved actors, all heading into the twilight of their careers. It's 1914, the whole world's about to fly apart – and down on the Tex-Mex border, Pike Bishop (Holden) and his gang of old-time outlaws are dreaming of that last "one good score". Of course they won't make it – we know that. But that's not what matters. What matters is whether Pike, and those who ride with him, can (to borrow a line from Joel McCrea in *Ride The High Country*) "enter his house justified". The passing of the Old West – that was where Sam Peckinpah's heart always lay. And, despite the violence, this is a movie about honour, chivalry and comradeship. **PK**

RONIN 1998

Thrill of the chase.

93 A film that the late great Roger Ebert declared enthusiastically as, "not really about anything", *Ronin* boasts a stellar cast: De Niro, Skarsgård, and, er, Bean. However, its real stars aren't those close-up camera-hoggers: it's the stunt drivers who should get all the credit, risking life and limb for the pure thrills of the movie's many exhilarating car chases.

Featuring Bond-style vehicle clashes and near misses through beautiful Gaelic countryside and idyllic French streets, you might be tempted to think Frankheimer directed *The French Connection* (almost – he did the sequel).

Its twisty-turny plot, knuckle-whitening action, and Robert Fraisse's inimitable cinematography made it both a box office and critical hit. *Ronin* feels rare: a film where critics and public enjoy the simple pleasure of a complicated pursuit. **MH**

POLICE STORY 1985

Chan is the man.

94 The six movies in the *Police Story* franchise make for one of the most consistently entertaining film series. Jackie Chan is Ka-Kui Chan, a cop who, in this first instalment, must protect Selina (Brigitte Lin) – a vital witness willing to testify against crime lord Chu Tao (Chor Yuen). This, of course, puts both him and Selina right in the firing line...

Based around a string of memorable action setpieces that Chan devised before the script had even been written, it's pure visual storytelling. Wanna see Chan flail down a string of exploding Christmas lights before falling through plate glass? It's here and done for real. Despite getting injured during filming, it was a passion project for Chan, who also wrote and directed the feature, and remained in place for the five sequels – though not always as Ka-Kui Chan, as films five and six were reboots. **WS**

SCARFACE 1983

The world is his.

95 The perennial poster favourite and gangster masterpiece remains as eminently quotable over 30 years on from its original release.

"There's a bad guy coming through!" "When you get the money, you get the power. Then when you get the power, then you get the women." "Say hello to my little friend!" All lines embedded into the catchphrase parlance, destined to be repeated by people who've never even seen the movie.

Pacino's coked-up Cuban refugee Tony Montana is a bristling firecracker of a character, dominating every scene. De Palma's eye for the period and Miami locale – all sun saturation and neon sleaze – has exerted impressive pop culture influence over the ensuing decades. Videogames, hip-hop, and of course, crime movies themselves, all owe creative debt to the legacy laid by the villainous antihero. **MH**

SORCERER 1977

It's wizard.

96 No, Friedkin's ill-fated follow-up to *The Exorcist* isn't a *Merlin* biopic, though that may have proved more financially rewarding during 1977's summer of *Star Wars*. Sadly, no amount of wizardry could have summoned up the box office receipts to keep this financial flop afloat, sinking as it did under its crippling budget and fight against a galaxy far, far away.

Based on Georges Arnaud's *Le Salaire De La Peur*, the second adaptation from the source novel, it's a sprawling, globe-trotting thriller, explosive, literally, in both tone and content. With Roy Scheider in the lead, the actors are so 1970s they might as well have cast a pair of flares and a Ford Cortina.

Finally achieving a timely critical reassessment, *Sorcerer* is the director's personal favourite and perhaps the last hurrah of cinema's pre-blockbuster age. Seek it out. **MH**



TAKING AIM

Jean Reno and Natalie Portman form an unlikely alliance.

LÉON: THE PROFESSIONAL 1994

Hit girl.

97 Luc Besson's art house action movie is a curious beast indeed. Léon (Jean Reno, playing his part with a beautiful, sad-eyed stoicism) is a hitman who forges an unlikely bond with a young

girl, Mathilda – Natalie Portman in her feature debut. Having lost her family to murderous cop Stansfield (Gary Oldman on bats-arse form, not so much chewing the scenery as devouring it whole), Mathilda is trained by Léon in the art of assassination, but the pair wind up helping heal each other's emotional wounds. That's not to say that the

bullets don't fly thick and fast – the final assault sequence is jaw-dropping – but there's an elegance and artfulness to Besson's work here that's leagues ahead of his recent, over-indulgent superhero flick *Lucy*, while the ambiguity between Léon and Mathilda's relationship (sweet, or deeply creepy?) adds a disquieting edge to proceedings. **WS**



JUNGLE FEVER
A team of commandos
are hunted by an
extraterrestrial warrior.

PREDATOR 1987

Get to the choppa!

98 John McTiernan's sci-fi hunt-'em-up takes us to 1980s South America, treating us to a special forces squad on a secret mission in the jungle. While looking for terrorists and their hostages, the team discover their army buddies skinned, before themselves becoming prey to a near-invisible alien. The titular killer hunts for sport, using an advanced plasma weapon and stealth technology to hide. Finally, team leader Dutch Schaefer (Schwarzenegger) uses his knowledge of guerilla warfare to trap the creature, covering himself in cold mud to avoid the Predator's thermal imaging scanner. What cements *Predator*'s place in every sci-fi fan's faves list are the steamy locations, the gruesome special effects and the hideous Predator itself, designed by prosthetics expert Stan Winston. **DB**



TOP GUN 1986

Sky's the limit.

99 Eighties high-concept cinema doesn't get any higher than this. Based on a magazine article, Tony Scott's actioner sees cocky naval aviator Lt. Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell (Tom Cruise) attend the Top Gun school at NAS Miramar, where he trains to be the 'best of the best' – not easy when Tom 'Iceman' Kazanski is your fierce rival. Comprised of alpha-male banter, heart-on-sleeve romance (the love scene between Cruise and Kelly McGillis plays to Berlin's 'Take My Breath Away') and still-thrilling dog fights in F-14 jets (look, no CGI!), *Top Gun* was the no.1 hit of 1986 and rocketed Cruise into the stratosphere. Quentin Tarantino, in 1994's *Sleep With Me*, propounded a gay subtext that is now impossible to miss (Bruce Weber's homoerotic photographs of young men helped shape the visual aesthetic). The 2022 sequel, *Top Gun: Maverick*, will see Cruise return to the cockpit with even crazier aerobatic stunts, no doubt. **JG**

DRAGON INN 1967

Attack of the evil eunuchs!

100 King Hu's '60s wuxia is as beautiful as it is thrilling and remains an influential slice of action cinema.

The story follows the children of the beheaded General Wu as they are escorted to safety at the Inn of the Dragon Gate. Little do they know that the emperor who had their father offed has planned an ambush and is sending his Black Arrow Troop to execute them. The film was a smash hit in Taiwan and Korea, but due to the Shaw Brothers owning the distribution rights, it did not recoup a lot of cash for The Union Film Company. Still, it has proven to be an enduring favourite and has since been remade twice as 1992's *New Dragon Gate Inn*, and in 2011 as *The Flying Swords Of Dragon Gate*. **WS**

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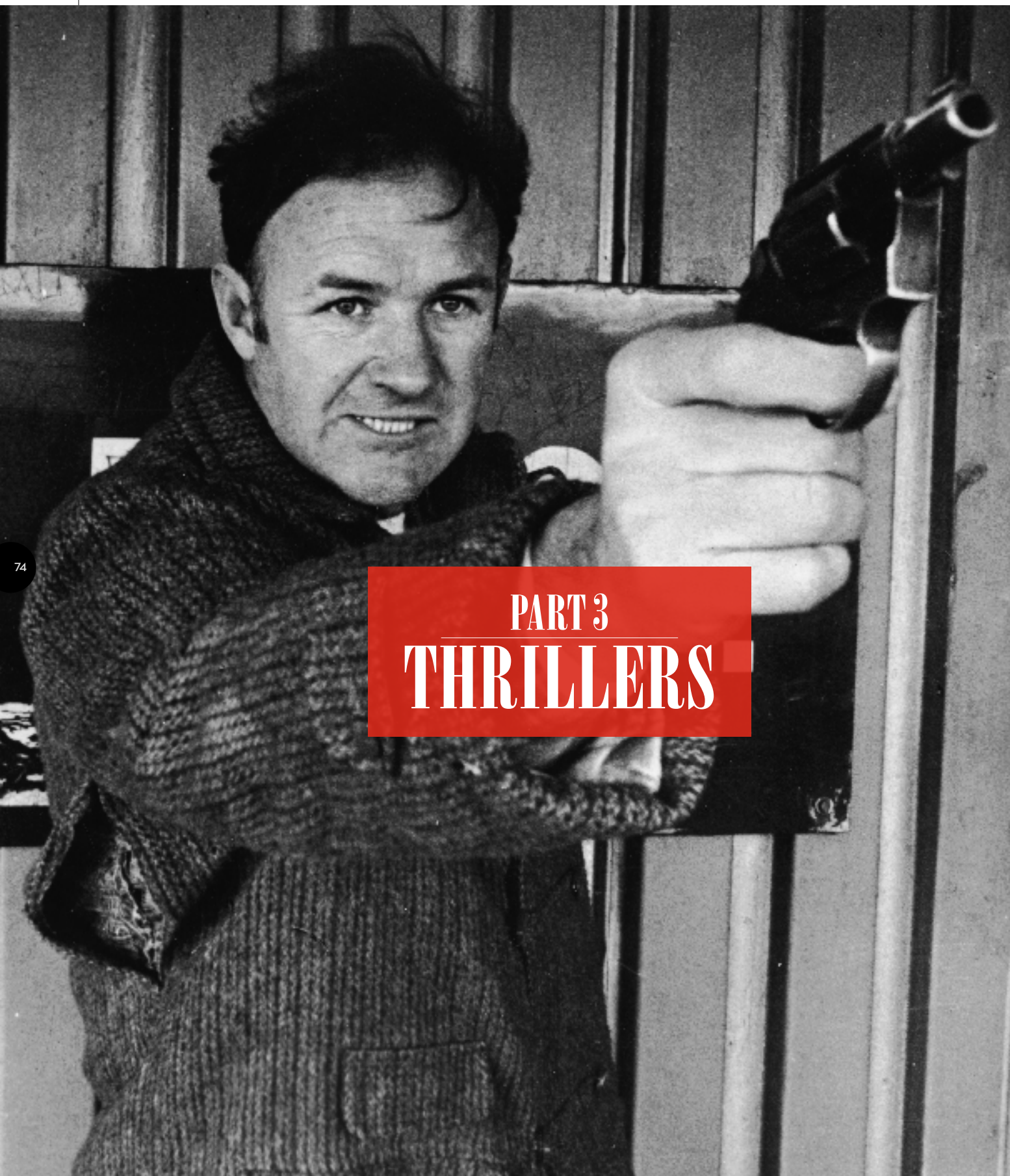
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100 MUST-SEE THRILLERS

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☐ Oldboy	☐ Double Indemnity	☐ Vertigo
☐ All The President's Men	☐ Magnolia	☐ Citizen Kane
☐ Sweet Smell Of Success	☐ The Lives Of Others	☐ Le Samouraï
☐ Build My Gallows High	☐ M	☐ Serpico
☐ Get Carter	☐ City Of God	☐ Fight Club
☐ Black Swan	☐ No Country For Old Men	☐ The Godfather: Part II
☐ White Heat	☐ The Treasure Of The Sierra Madre	☐ Bonnie And Clyde
☐ Sunset Boulevard	☐ On The Waterfront	☐ Touch Of Evil
☐ Rififi	☐ The Departed	☐ The Big Sleep
☐ Breathless	☐ Blue Velvet	☐ Chinatown
☐ Badlands	☐ Manhunter	☐ The 39 Steps
☐ Trainspotting	☐ True Romance	☐ Marathon Man
☐ Dirty Harry	☐ GoodFellas	☐ The Long Good Friday
☐ Catch Me If You Can	☐ Seven	☐ Sicario
☐ A History Of Violence	☐ Rashomon	☐ Uncut Gems
☐ High Noon	☐ Stagecoach	☐ Zodiac
☐ Logan	☐ Miller's Crossing	☐ Heat
☐ Reservoir Dogs	☐ Rio Bravo	☐ The Wages Of Fear
☐ Children Of Men	☐ Carlito's Way	☐ Jackie Brown
☐ Spotlight	☐ Taxi Driver	☐ One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest
☐ The Insider	☐ Fatal Attraction	☐ Boyz N The Hood
☐ Drive	☐ Traffic	☐ The Third Man
☐ The Long Goodbye	☐ Performance	☐ 12 Angry Men
☐ The Last Seduction	☐ North By Northwest	☐ Once Upon A Time In America
☐ The Manchurian Candidate	☐ Fargo	☐ The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo
☐ Kiss Me Deadly	☐ Casablanca	☐ The Untouchables
☐ Rear Window	☐ Mean Streets	☐ The Night Of The Hunter
☐ L.A. Confidential	☐ Out Of Sight	☐ The French Connection
☐ Assault On Precinct 13	☐ Persona	☐ The Maltese Falcon
☐ The Killing	☐ Point Blank	☐ The Conversation
☐ Pulp Fiction	☐ The Shawshank Redemption	☐ A Quiet Place
☐ The Godfather	☐ Parasite	☐ The Usual Suspects
☐ Memento	☐ Notorious	☐ Hidden
		☐ Sonatine

OLDBOY 2003

It's hammer time.

01 Famously awarded the Jury Prize by Quentin Tarantino at Cannes, Park Chan-wook's dazzling revenge is a movie of jaw-plummeting premise and stomach-clenching scenes. For no obvious reason, Oh Dae-Su (Choi Min-Sik) is kidnapped and imprisoned for 15 years, and then, also without explanation, released with a challenge to find out why he was taken; his roaring rampage of revenge takes in eating a live octopus, yanking out a lowlife's teeth and attacking an army of goons with a hammer in a stunning single take. The extreme violence won't be to everyone's tastes, but *Oldboy* is superbly shot, acted and directed, and the brutality is questioned at every turn, our 'hero' troubled by his actions and Park concerned as much with redemption as revenge. Spike Lee's 2013 remake felt pointless. **JG**



ORIGINAL OLDBOY
Revenge at its most violent.
The 2003 film knocks
blood spots off the remake.

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN 1976

Word.

02 It's a measure of *All The President's Men*'s enduring power that 2016's Best Picture winner, *Spotlight*, was compared and contrasted to Alan J. Pakula's taut thriller in pretty much every review. Adapted from Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward's book, it tracks the aforementioned *Washington Post* journalists as they uncover the details of the Watergate scandal. Robert Redford (Woodward) and Dustin Hoffman (Bernstein) hung out at the offices of *The Washington Post* for weeks prior to filming, and added further verisimilitude by learning each other's lines so they could interrupt each other at will; while every detail in the script was fact-checked and verified by independent sources. The result is far from dry – scenes involving informant 'Deep Throat' throb with suspense. **JG**



SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS 1957

Bullets over Broadway.

03 If Alexander Mackendrick laced Ealing films like *Whisky Galore!* with tangy cynicism, his cup of malice over-flowed for his ink-black US noir. Critics and Tony Curtis fans hated *Sweet Smell...*, but it numbers among Hollywood's greatest and most fearlessly played flops. At a career crossroads when he signed up, Curtis acts the hell out of his on-the-make press agent, Sidney Falco. Towering over Curtis' devilish predator, Burt Lancaster swung down from swashbucklers to play J.J. Hunsecker, a ruthless gossip columnist oozing villainy, incestuous urges and a determination to smear his sister's romance. With its attack-jazz score, lacerating dialogue and glistening nocturnal New York adding relish, Mackendrick dished the dirt on media malignancy without any sweetening spin: no wonder the press couldn't take it. **KH**

BUILD MY GALLOWES HIGH 1947

Nightmare noir.

04 Aptly, for a twisty-turny film noir, this has two titles. Known in America as *Out Of The Past*, it was rechristened here after one of the screenplay's terse, laconic lines. That duality extends to the film itself. All noir staples are present and correct – hard-boiled characters, shadowy visuals, fatalistic mood – but the feverish story has the slippery quality of a dream. Beginning in uncharacteristic sunlight, flashbacks drag doomed anti-hero Robert Mitchum to face his history of violence with mobster Kirk Douglas and the girl who came between them, femme none-more-fatale Jane Greer. As directed by horror specialist Jacques Tourneur, this marries weird set-pieces with a lethal intensity. Greer's sexy, nice/nasty persona echoes Tourneur's earlier *Cat People*, while Mitchum's sleepy persona is perfect for a dead man walking. **SK**

UNWELCOME RETURN

Jack Carter (Michael Caine) settles a few scores in this '70's crime thriller.

GET CARTER 1971

Big film, still in shape.

05 London gangster Jack Carter (Michael Caine) travels to Newcastle to discover the hard truths behind his brother's mysterious death in Mike Hodges' bleak, brutal thriller. Indeed, so cold, sparse and terse is this take on Ted Lewis' 1970 novel *Jack's Return Home*, it's hard to credit why it became such a lad's mag favourite, save for such quotable dialogue as, "You're a big man, but you're out of shape." Hodges was surprised that Caine, a major star after *Alfie*, *The Italian Job* and *The Ipcress File*, would desire to play such an unlikeable character, but Caine knew these people and wanted to show that English crime films got them wrong. "Gangsters are not stupid, and they're certainly not very funny," he said. Avoid the Sylvester Stallone remake at all costs. **JG**



PARANOID POISE
Natalie Portman's ballerina
is consumed with dance
and dark rivalry.

BLACK SWAN 2010

Aronofsky is en pointe...

06 Darren Aronofsky talks about Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *All About Eve*, Roman Polanski's *The Tenant* and Dostoyevsky's *The Double* when discussing *Black Swan*. Star Natalie Portman references another Polanski movie, *Rosemary's Baby*. For Vincent Cassel, it's David Cronenberg's early body horrors. Critics cite Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes*. Well, it's to director Aronofsky's immense credit that he takes all of these influences and makes something undeniably his own, a midnight-black thriller about a delicate ballerina (Portman) whose sanity splinters as she strives to play the White and Black Swans in a production of *Swan Lake*. Psychosis, erotica, extraordinary set-pieces (Aronofsky shot in 16mm so the cameras could "dance")... perhaps the most legitimate influence is actually Dario Argento, whose most famous picture, *Suspiria*, is of course set at a ballet academy. **JG**



WHITE HEAT 1949

Mum's the word.

07 Along with the likes of Humphrey Bogart and Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney proved that gangsters had all the fun in 1930s crime movies... at least until the Hays Code demanded their immorality be punished in the final reel. *White Heat*, though released in 1950 in the UK, belongs to this cycle, while also anticipating such hardboiled heist movies as John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle* and Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing*. Drawing on the rages of his own alcoholic father, Cagney gives his most psychotic performance as mother-fixated Cody Jarrett (he even plans heists while sat on his mommy's lap, 'Ma' Jarrett, played by Margaret Wycherly), and tears up the screen until he's finally trapped atop an oil refinery. "Made it, ma, top of the world!" he bellows, then shoots at his feet to set the world on fire. **JG**

SUNSET BOULEVARD 1950

A star is reborn.

08 "I am big! It's the pictures that got small," declares Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) in Billy Wilder's funfair-mirror facsimile of Hollywood. No surprises it ruffled feathers at the time (MGM boss Louis B. Mayer accused Wilder of disgracing the industry); with its cynical insider view of the filmmaking biz at the height of the Studio System, *Sunset Boulevard* is knife sharp and darkly grotesque, featuring a dynamite central turn by Swanson. She came out of retirement to play decaying icon Desmond, whose mansion is the scene of the apparent murder of screenwriter Joe Gillis (William Holden), and the one-time superstar's involvement blurs the lines between fact and fiction even further in a film whose post-modern influence pervades everything from Altman's *The Player* to Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*. A masterpiece. **JW**

RIFIPI 1955

Silence is golden.

09 Fleeing the anti-Communist blacklist, US-born Hollywood director Jules Dassin arrived in Paris to create one of the most ultra-French thrillers ever made. Wreathed in a fug of Gauloises smoke and existential gloom, *Rififi* (underworld slang for 'serious trouble') tracks the scheme – and its ill-fated aftermath – of four crooks to heist the stock of a plush Parisian jewellery store. The film's stroke of genius is the robbery sequence itself: 25 minutes of minutely-observed detail, played out without dialogue or background music. Much-imitated (*Topkapi*, *Gambit*, *The Wrong Trousers*), the sequence may have stemmed from Dassin's dislike of the source material, 'Du rififi chez les hommes' by Auguste Le Breton, as it allowed him to dispense with as much of it as possible. Dassin himself always claimed it was to disguise his limited grasp of French. **PK**

BREATHLESS 1960

French connection.

10 Jean-Luc Godard famously remarked that cinema needed only "a girl and a gun". Story-wise, his debut proves the point, as Jean-Paul Belmondo's Bogart-obsessed rebel shoots a cop and hides out with American girlfriend Jean Seberg. Yet if the outline betrays the French critic-turned-director's debt to Hollywood noir, Godard is spectacularly unconcerned with plot. Instead, we get a mosaic of ideas and in-jokes that barely qualifies as a thriller... except that it, well, *thrills*. Everything here is style, texture, attitude, from the carefree lack of morality to the ingenious use of wheelchairs for tracking shots. Godard was rebuilding cinema in his image and when the pieces didn't fit, he simply hopped over the gap using his signature 'jump cut'. The jagged, nerve-jangling result pulsed through the entire medium, inspiring everyone from Scorsese to Tarantino. **SK**

BADLANDS 1973

Malick's magical mystery tour...

11 Based, loosely, on the cross-country kill spree of Charles Starkweather and Caril Ann Fugate in 1958, *Badlands* saw debut writer/director Terrence Malick imbue his drama with magical realism ("Like a fairytale, outside time," he said) to bring an eerie beauty to the darkest deeds. Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek are the lovers on the lam, he a James Dean figure and she with her nose forever pressed to a pulp magazine while her breathy, purple-prose voiceover makes it clear she's living in a land of make-believe. Malick's eye for the mystery and majesty of nature is very much in evidence – these human dots traverse enormous fields and forests under arching blue skies while creatures great and small look on – but he's not yet untethered himself from traditional narrative, loose as the action is. Stunning. **JG**



DEEP BLUE DAY
Renton (Ewan McGregor)
goes for a swim in the
worst toilet in Scotland.

TRAINSPOTTING 1996

Bleak hit...

12 Choose life, choose a job... choose Danny Boyle's heart-pounding take on Irvine Welsh's novel about Leith junkies, wasters and psychopaths. Perhaps it's an unusual entry in a list of thrillers,

but Boyle's pacing is electric – right from the very first scene, cut to Iggy Pop's 'Lust For Life', as Ewan McGregor's rake-thin heroin addict Renton flees down Edinburgh's Princes Street after a spot of shoplifting. What's more, as it pieces the fragments of Welsh's story into a coherent whole, John Hodges'

Oscar-nominated script boasts the texture of a thriller – whether it be the explosive tension that comes on a night out with Robert Carlyle's ultra-violent Begbie or the drug-deal finale as Renton and the others head to London to trade a kilo of smack with Keith Allen. The 2017 sequel couldn't come fast enough. **JM**

FEELING LUCKY?

Clint Eastwood does it his way as maverick cop, 'Dirty' Harry Callahan.

DIRTY HARRY

1971

Shoot to thrill.

13 In 2012, Don Siegel's thriller was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library Of Congress for being "culturally, historically and aesthetically significant". Not bad for a movie that was labelled fascist upon release. Clint Eastwood plays no-nonsense (likes to beat the shit out of people) San Francisco cop 'Dirty' Harry Callahan, armed with his trusty .44 Magnum and tracking the Scorpio Killer (Andy Robinson) who is terrorising the city. A lean, mean, action machine that was the fourth highest-grossing movie of 1971, *Dirty Harry* could have been so very different, with Terrence Malick penning a discarded script and several older tough guys (Wayne, McQueen, Lancaster, Sinatra, Mitchum) offered the role before Eastwood made it his own. Four sequels followed over the next 17 years. **JG**



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 2002

Spielberg's con caper flies.

14 Steven Spielberg and Leonardo DiCaprio's first and only collaboration, so far, happened almost by accident; delays on Leo's *Gangs Of New York* meant original director Gore Verbinski had to depart. DiCaprio's boyish looks came in handy, as this "80 per cent true" story required the then 28-year-old to portray a 17-year-old pretending to be 28, as Frank Abagnale Jr. cons his way around the world posing as a pilot, a doctor and a lawyer. It's always breezily watchable, from Frank's charming tricks to the 'Berg's Bond references, but below the surface fun there are rich depths, especially in the father-son themes ricocheting between Franks Jr. and Sr. (Christopher Walken), and FBI pursuer Carl Hanratty (Tom Hanks). The 11th highest-grosser of 2002, it was just pipped to 10th place by Spielberg's *Minority Report*. **MM**



ONE STEP AHEAD
Leo evades the law as high-flying imposter Frank Abagnale Jr.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE 2005

Not your average comic-book movie.

15 When Tom (Viggo Mortensen) kills two armed men attempting to rob his diner, he becomes something of a local hero, attracting the attention of a sinister mobster (Ed Harris) who claims to have known Tom back when he was called Joey. In one of the best of his 21st-Century pictures, David Cronenberg probes into sins of the past and consequences of violence, making use of Mortensen's tough and tender shades. The director added two sex scenes when he landed the graphic novel adap, including a bruising, controversy-baiting staircase hook-up between Mortensen and Maria Bello that saw a stuntman called in to give advice. William Hurt earned an Oscar nom out of barely 10 minutes of screen time as Tom/Joey's menacing sibling, and the film became the last major Hollywood movie released on VHS. **MM**



HIGH NOON 1952

A man's gotta do...

16 A western that delivers plenty of thrills thanks to a ticking timeline: on the day of his wedding, lawman Will Kane (Gary Cooper) learns that an outlaw he once sent to prison (Ian MacDonald) is arriving on the noon train, hungry for revenge. Unfolding (almost) in real time, Fred Zinnemann's multiple Oscar-winner didn't please everyone upon release: punters wanted more action; conservatives felt it demonised those who refused to stand up to the House Of Un-American Activities Committee (the townsfolk refuse to help the marshal face down big bad Frank Miller and his gang); and John Wayne felt Kane was an un-American wuss. Now it stands tall where others fall, the beauty of its classical filmmaking and the long shadows cast by its hero's moral struggling make it a film that lingers. **JG**

LOGAN 2017

This is the end.

17 Hugh Jackman played James 'Logan' Howlett, aka Wolverine, nine times over 17 years - one of the longest and most successful runs for any screen superhero. But there's little question that he saved the best performance for last with *Logan*, a poignant end-of-era tale that goes against the grain of most comic-book movies. Fully embracing the violent Logan of the page, James Mangold's film has more in common with classic westerns than anything in the superhero genre, as the last X-Man standing cares for a dementia-riddled Charles Xavier and surrogate daughter Laura, all while being pursued by Donald Pierce (Boyd Holbrook) and his militant Reavers. A rare comic-book film that's significantly more interested in character than spectacle, it locates hope in a bleak world, and through the most nihilistic of superheroes. **JF**

RESERVOIR DOGS 1992

QT's diamond debut.

18 From the pre-credits intro, as a bunch of sharp-suited guys discuss Madonna's 'Like A Virgin', Quentin Tarantino's debut announced its writer-director as something special. A jigsaw-tale about a diamond heist gone wrong, its white-walled warehouse setting was the perfect blank backdrop for Tarantino's bloody saga, as the likes of Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth, Michael Madsen and Steve Buscemi's colour-coded gangsters trade blows and barbs while figuring out who ratted them out. Borrowing heavily from cinema history – everything from classics *The Killing* and *The Asphalt Jungle* to Ringo Lam's thriller *City On Fire* – Tarantino melts his influences into a pop culture cauldron to revitalise the genre. And, yes, that torture scene, as Madsen's Mr. Blonde slices a cop's ear, has lost none of its power. **JM**

COLOURFUL CRIME

Mr Pink and Mr White face off in Tarantino's bloody *Reservoir Dogs*.



CHILDREN OF MEN 2006

Future imperfect.

19 England, 2027: a modern-day hell where the absence of children has led to totalitarian rule, state-sanctioned suicide and fears of immigration. Beginning with a terrorist bomb on London streets and explicitly engaging with post-9/11 politics, Alfonso Cuarón's film has a horribly vivid immediacy. Where most dystopian visions pile on the futurism, Cuarón aimed for something more authentic. The edginess is intensified by cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki's pre-Gravity experiments in fluid, technically audacious long takes that are closer to war reportage than sci-fi spectacle. For all the carnage, there is hope, too, not least that the story's moral centre is Michael Caine, playing a hippy dissident who breaks wind as freely as he breaks the rules. **SK**



SPOTLIGHT 2015

News team assemble...

20 A '70s-style newsroom thriller about a real-life case in 2003, which picked up the Best Picture Oscar in 2015. There's a timelessness to Tom McCarthy's sensitive depiction of the unfurling investigation into widespread sexual abuse in the Catholic church. This was a case that spanned back decades and was unearthed by reporters in the Spotlight team at *The Boston Globe*. The ensemble cast (Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams, Michael Keaton, Liev Schreiber, Stanley Tucci) bring gravitas and class to an issues film that is depressingly current in a time where child abuse stories are increasingly prevalent, and trust in the press is at an all-time low. *Spotlight* sits in the mould of *All The President's Men*, focusing on the process, the power and responsibility of great news reporting. As writer Josh Singer said: "Journalism is important." **PA**

THE INSIDER 1999

No smoke without fire.

21 Russell Crowe landed his first Oscar nomination playing Jeffrey Wigand, the real-life whistleblower whose doomed attempt to expose the corporate hypocrisy of Big Tobacco saw him discredited, persecuted and intimidated. Yet Michael Mann's drama also points the finger at the big-wigs at CBS News – urbane personified by Christopher Plummer's Mike Wallace – who were only too happy to throw him under the bus if it meant reducing their own liability. Somewhere in the middle lies Lowell Bergman (Al Pacino), an ethical producer trying to do right by his source who's rendered powerless by the powers that be. Watching this ignominious saga play out offers a cautionary lesson on the unholy alliance between big business and the media, with all the conventions – reversals, double-crosses, combustible confrontations – of a mainstream Hollywood pulse-racer. **NS**



DRIVE 2011

Fast and curious.

22 *Drive* would have been very different if it was directed by Neil Marshall with Hugh Jackman behind the wheel, as originally intended. Instead, in the hands of Nicolas Winding Refn, it became part fairytale, part John Hughes movie, as Ryan Gosling's laconic getaway 'Driver' gets close to his neighbour Irene (Carey Mulligan) and is drawn into a heist with her husband (Oscar Isaac). Hyper-stylised and sparsely plotted, *Drive* moves to its own ('80s-flavoured synth) beat, with only a handful of high-speed set-pieces and startling moments of unexpected ultra-violence (Winding Refn took advice on head-splattering from *Irreversible*'s Gaspar No  ). The supporting cast is excellent, but Gosling's the scorpion-jacketed king of cool, even restoring the 1973 Chevy Malibu himself in preparation for the role. *TF* was smitten, naming it our film of 2011. **MM**

THE LONG GOODBYE 1973

Marlowe hangs loose.

23 In some ways Robert Altman's take on Raymond Chandler is a throwback: as private eye Philip Marlowe, Elliot Gould's vintage Cabriolet and dress sense seem anachronistic within the counter-cultural milieu the movie moves in. But in most respects it's wilfully untraditional, to the point of verging on parody. The central mystery – did Marlowe's friend murder his wife, and what happened to a suitcase of cash in his care – is crowded out by oddball details and quirky characterisation. And Gould's mumbling gumshoe is repeatedly emasculated and undermined (Altman lavishes 10 minutes on his attempts to feed a fussy feline; Bogart's Marlowe would have kicked the cat). But though Gould's PI couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag, Altman's movie can sure deliver a gut punch. **JB**

THE LAST SEDUCTION 1994

None more noir.

24 *The Last Seduction* wasn't meant to be any good. According to writer Steve Barancik, the execs wanted John Dahl's neo-noir to be a steamy B-movie and even made all the principles formally promise that they had no arthouse intentions. Instead they delivered one of the best thrillers of the '90s, with femme fatale Bridget Gregory (Linda Fiorentino) becoming an instant icon as she extorts cash from her husband (Bill Pullman) and then manipulates and murders her way around a small town. The dialogue is electric, the story spirals vertiginously, but it's Fiorentino's ferocious energy, both sexual and intellectual, that makes her truly dastardly anti-heroine so compelling. When filming began the execs sent flowers to cast and crew saying "here's to the sexiest movie ever". It's so much better than that. **PA**



DARKLY DUPLICITOUS

Linda Fiorentino plays ferociously in this noir thriller.

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE 1962

Red menace.

25 A decorated US soldier is revealed to be a pawn in a fiendish communist conspiracy in a Cold War classic whose influence can be felt on everything from the Bourne movies to *Zoolander*. The soldier in question is Raymond Shaw and Laurence Harvey, puts his inexpressiveness to good use as the brainwashed Korean war veteran who only needs to see a certain playing card to become a cold-blooded assassin. Frank Sinatra, meanwhile, atones for portraying a would-be killer himself in *Suddenly* by trying to stop him, a mission made harder by a finger injury he picked up while shooting a fight scene with his *Candidate* co-star Henry Silva. Controversial on its initial release, John Frankenheimer's gripping thriller acquired a new layer of notoriety in the wake of JFK's assassination the following year. **NS**



KISS ME DEADLY 1955

Noir goes nuclear.

26 There's no noir more hard boiled than this Robert Aldrich adaptation of a Mickey Spillane novel, and no private eye more appropriately named than Ralph Meeker's Mike Hammer: the guy's a blunt instrument, kicking doors open and cracking skulls. He's also an amoral louse, driven by greed rather than a thirst for justice, with flashes of leering sadism. Spillane was not happy... But what really sticks in the memory isn't Meeker's anti-hero, or the script's bullet-ricochet poetry of cynical one-liners, but the moment a mysterious box – the MacGuffin that drives the film's plot (and whose inner glow inspired the suitcase in *Pulp Fiction*) – is finally opened. You'll find no spoilers here, but suffice to say there are echoes of Pandora's box in a climax that seems more supernatural than scientific. **IB**



REAR WINDOW 1954

Neighbourhood watch.

27 Some claim *Rear Window* as the greatest film Alfred Hitchcock ever made. It's undoubtedly the most Hitchcockian film on his showreel, its brew of black comedy, murder caper thrills, high-end romance and voyeurism distilling the very essence of his work. In James Stewart's wheelchair-bound protagonist – a peeping tom ensnared in a cat-and-mouse game with a murderous neighbour – Hitch found his perfect screen avatar, turning his sweaty prurience and love of intrigue into something heroic. The movie's true star is its set, an enormous, intricate soundstage fantasy of a Greenwich Village courtyard. It's more a giant board game than a set and Hitchcock's joy in getting to play with it leaps off the screen. Paranoid, sexy, thrilling and witty, *Rear Window* makes us all complicit in a classic movie experience. **NSe**

L.A. CONFIDENTIAL 1997

City of fallen angels.

28 Nobody held out a great deal of hope for *L.A. Confidential* – how could anyone even begin to squeeze James Ellroy's labyrinthine 500-page novel (the third in the author's L.A. Quartet series) into a movie, least of all Curtis Hanson, peddler of slick mainstream thrillers (*The River Wild*, *The Hand That Rocks The Cradle*). And then there was that cast – Mike off *Neighbours*, some New Zealander, the farmer from *Babe*, and a washed-up Kim Basinger. Yet somehow Hanson and screenwriter Brian Helgeland delivered a neo-noir to rival *Chinatown*, chronicling the boom of '50s LA as three very different cops (Russell Crowe, Guy Pearce, Kevin Spacey) investigate a shooting in a diner. The climax is a little tidy, but this is otherwise perfection. **JG**



ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 1976

Siege mentality.

29 "A cop with a war on his hands. His enemy... an army of street killers. His only ally... a convicted murderer." So proclaimed the original poster for John Carpenter's cult classic, a siege thriller that transplanted elements of Howard Hawks' *Rio Bravo* and George A. Romero's *Night Of The Living Dead* into a screenplay originally named 'The Anderson Alamo'. Written in eight days and shot in 20, the resulting film reflects the circumstances of its creation in both its relentless propulsion and its occasional lapses of judgement; 40 years on, the savage slaying of 'Ice Cream Girl' Kim Richards is still much debated. ("I don't think I'd do it again," admitted the director in 2008.) The 2005 remake with Laurence Fishburne and Ethan Hawke is semi-decent, but not a patch on this suffocatingly tense effort. **NS**



THE KILLING 1956

Full-bore Kubrick.

30 Sure, some of the cast end up dead, but essentially the title's as in 'making a killing': the loot in this case being the takings of a big race-track. Following the classic template of John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle* (reworked for comedy in Alexander Mackendrick's 1955 film *The Ladykillers*), Kubrick's crooks carry out the heist according to plan; only afterwards do things start to go belly-up, as jealousy and betrayal tear the gang apart. Sterling Hayden reprises his gang-leader from Huston's movie, backed by a gallery of great character actors, including duplicitous floozie Marie Windsor and perennial fall-guy Elisha Cook Jr. Kubrick, in the first movie of his that he cared to acknowledge, observes the proceeds with cold-eyed control and an intricate flurry of flashbacks – and a little dog triggers the ultimate futility. **PK**

TWISTING TALE

Uma Thurman plays it cool in iconic '90's flick *Pulp Fiction*.

PULP FICTION 1994

A royale treat...

31 Was video-store geek Quentin Tarantino's blistering debut *Reservoir Dogs* a (muzzle) flash in the pan? QT's sophomore feature winning the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1994 answered that question, and *Pulp Fiction* went on to be nominated for seven Oscars and make a major impact on popular culture. (An impact still sadly felt whenever Winston Wolf shows up in a Direct Line ad.) This was Tarantino's first foray into the sprawling novelistic approach that's now his signature, as three tales populated by lowlifes and underworld figures – hitmen, a boxer, a mobster's moll, etc. – loop and interweave. There are longueurs and a frankly embarrassing turn from Tarantino himself, but quotable dialogue, breakneck mood shifts, structural dexterity, sparkling performances and an aching 'cool' make it a classic. **JG**



KISS THE RING

Don Vito Corleone takes requests for favours on his daughter's wedding day.



THE GODFATHER 1972

An offer you can't refuse.

32 The biggest box-office hit of 1972, winner of three Oscars (Film, Actor, Adapted Screenplay) and a high-ranking mainstay in Greatest Films Ever Made lists, *The Godfather* wasn't all plain sailing: Paramount were itchy to replace Francis Ford Coppola as director, DOP Gordon Willis was dubbed 'The Prince of Darkness' because his sets were so underlit, and Marlon Brando, playing the titular patriarch of a crime dynasty, read many of his lines off cue cards. Viewed now, one of the most striking things about this key New Hollywood picture is just how gloriously old-fashioned it is, with Willis and Coppola favouring flat, traditional shots (the camera usually four feet off the ground) that fit the 1940s and '50s time period. Such classicism makes the sudden bursts of violence all the more shocking. **JG**



MEMENTO 2000

Nolan's unforgettable breakthrough.

33 After his ultra-low-budget debut *Following*, Christopher Nolan made what would be his Hollywood calling card, and arguably his best film – in 2012, *TF* writers named it the second-best movie of our lifetime, beaten only by tripartite epic *The Lord Of The Rings*. In an elegantly complex narrative that'd become something of a Nolan trademark, Leonard (Guy Pearce), an amnesiac unable to make new memories, hunts for his wife's killer, tattooing clues on his torso. If that high concept wasn't vertiginous enough, the film starts at the end, with Leonard gunning down his target; the scenes leading up to that moment then play in reverse order, with confident clarity. Shot in only 25 days, *Memento*'s success helped Nolan cast three Oscar-winners in his next film, before he set off to reinvent the superhero blockbuster. **MM**

DOUBLE INDEMNITY 1944

Cashing in.

34 Directed by Billy Wilder (see also *Sunset Boulevard*), co-written by Raymond Chandler (*The Big Sleep*), from a 1943 book by James M. Cain (*The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Mildred Pierce*), this dastardly noir might just be the genre's ultimate exemplar. Though cast against type, femme fatale Barbara Stanwyck and fall guy Fred MacMurray (who warned Wilder, "You're making the mistake of your life!") conjure plenty of electricity as lovers scheming to kill her husband, dump the body off a train and cream off the insurance payout; Edward G. Robinson stomps and scowls magnificently as MacMurray's boss/bromancer; and cinematographer John Seitz's 'Venetian blind' lighting puts the cracks appearing between them up on screen. Fiendishly plotted, snappily directed and sexy as hell, it hasn't aged a day, rattling past like an express. **MG**

MAGNOLIA 1999

Frog day afternoon.

35 “I really feel that *Magnolia* is, for better or worse, the best movie I’ll ever make,” said writer/director Paul Thomas Anderson of his epic drama of heartbreak and happenstance. And who are we to argue? Dizzily assembled by a filmmaker at the height of his powers, it tracks the rippling relationships of some loosely interconnected San Fernando Valley residents over the course of one eventful evening. Featuring Paul Thomas Anderson regulars John C. Reilly, Julianne Moore and Philip Seymour Hoffman, plus a career-best Tom Cruise, it builds to a climax so intense it busts down the fourth wall, with Aimee Mann’s gorgeous songs (one of which was written for *Jerry Maguire*) belted out by the cast, and a breaking storm that represents one of the most daring scenes of the era. **MG**

THE LIVES OF OTHERS 2006

The walls have ears.

36 Here’s one that the director of *The Tourist* made earlier... Thankfully, Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck’s tense thriller *The Lives Of Others* is of a quality that begs the question, just how the hell did he make that terrible romantic-caper starring Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie? Set in East Berlin in the mid-1980s, this winner of the Best Foreign Language Oscar sees surveillance expert Captain Wiesler (Ulrich Muehe, superb) charged with spying on playwright Georg Dreyman (Sebastian Koch) and his actress flame Christa-Maria Sieland (Martina Gedeck). It’s a job that causes him to question the ethics of the Stasi regime. Donnersmarck drew on his own childhood to create the film’s mood – his parents were from East Germany and he recalls sensing the atmosphere of fear on visits. **JG**

M 1931

Fritz Lang on his A-game.

37 Fritz Lang had already shaped the future of science-fiction movies with *Metropolis* when he made *M*, credited with forming the serial killer and police procedural sub-genres. It’s a grim, ghastly film in the best possible way, the screen filled with shadows literal and metaphorical as Peter Lorre’s child killer is pursued, first by police, then by Berlin’s criminal element. Lorre’s sweaty performance as Hans Beckert can’t be scrubbed from your brain, but he’s hardly on screen; *M* was Lang’s first sound picture, but talking is kept to a minimum and a whistled tune is more important than any dialogue. Made as the Nazi Party began to take hold of Germany’s throat, *M* presents a sick society and burns with disgust. Lang would leave Germany for Paris three years later, next stop the United States and Hollywood. **JG**



GANG LIFE

Set on the streets of the notorious Cidade de Deus slum in Brazil.

CITY OF GOD 2002

Boys from Brazil.

38 We called Fernando Meirelles’ film “the Brazilian *GoodFellas*” on its initial release and the comparison still stands, the director’s visceral chronicle of life as it is lived and lost in Rio de Janeiro’s sprawling

favelas having all the urgency, veracity and gallows humour of Scorsese’s 1990 masterpiece. Yet while Ray Liotta’s Henry Hill is more than happy to become a wiseguy, *City*’s hero Rocket (Alexandre Rodrigues) simply wants to survive: an aspiration this budding photographer finds increasingly

hard to actualise the more his native slums fall prey to guns, drugs and gangs. Prior to shooting, Meirelles sought leave from the favela’s jailed overlord and was told to make his film “as real as possible”. With the help of a cast of unknowns drawn from the actual ghetto, he did exactly that. **NS**

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

2007

Fate accomplished.

39

That off screen death, that strange elliptical ending, that unstoppable assassin with the bowl-cut hairdo:

the Coen brothers' western thriller is a mysterious masterpiece that wilfully subverts the genre at every turn. Bleak? Perhaps, but this tale of a blue-collar man (Josh Brolin) who stumbles on a failed drug deal and thus attracts the relentless pursuit of Javier Bardem's hit-man Anton Chigurh punches like a bolt from his cattle gun. Faithfully adapted from Cormac McCarthy's novel of the same name, the

material is perfect for the Coens, who fell for its "pitiless quality" as it explores big themes of fate and consequence, morality and mortality. Long time collaborator Roger Deakins lenses the unforgiving landscapes with operatic beauty, landing himself an Oscar nod for best cinematography. He was overlooked but the film took four, including Best Picture and Best Director. **PA**



PAY DAY HUNT
Llewelyn Moss (Josh Brolin)
must stay one step ahead
of his pursuing killer.

THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE 1948

Lust in the dust.

40 Bogart never had any trouble playing tough, but rarely quite so repellently nasty as in John Huston's Mexico-set adventure. As prospector Fred C. Dobbs, he sinks steadily into snarling paranoia as the lust for gold consumes him, observed by his companions, old-timer Walter Huston (the director's dad) and youngster Tim Holt. Working from a novel by the enigmatic B. Traven, whose sardonic outlook chimed perfectly with his own, the director heads towards his favourite 'Huston ending' – a quest for money, power or whatever that leads inexorably to failure and futility. (See *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, etc.) Shot mainly on stark Mexican locations, *Treasure* was rated by James Agee "one of the most beautiful and visually alive movies I have ever seen". **PK**



ON THE WATERFRONT 1954

Coulda been a contender...

41 The underlying politics are dubious: both director Elia Kazan and writer Budd Schulberg named names to get themselves off the Commie-hunters' hook, so a paean to the virtue of informers leaves an unpalatable taste. But if you can overlook that, this tale of ex-boxer Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) struggling against rampant corruption in the New York longshoremen's union is high-impact stuff. Toss in Rod Steiger, Lee J. Cobb, Eva Marie Saint, Karl Malden and a whole roof full of pigeons, plus Lenny Bernstein's sole original movie score and the great Boris Kaufman (Dziga Vertov's brother, no less) on camera, and you have yourself an impressive package. Ultimately, though, it's Brando's film. Pauline Kael raved, crediting him with the ability to "convey the multiple and paradoxical meanings in a character". **PK**



THE DEPARTED 2006

Marty plays cops 'n' robbers.

42 Forever associated with gangster movies, Martin Scorsese half-returned to the genre with this remake of Hong Kong thriller *Infernal Affairs*. The other half is a cop movie – something Scorsese had never done before. Set in South Boston, it sees Leonardo DiCaprio play an undercover flatfoot who infiltrates a gang of Irish mobsters led by an off-the-chain Jack Nicholson, while Matt Damon is a crim ensconced in the police department. An elaborate game of cat-and-mouse ensues, coloured by levels of violence that would make Tom and Jerry flinch, and some poetic swearing (mostly by a career-best Mark Wahlberg) to rival David Mamet. OK, so the Oscar wins were the Academy finally rewarding Scorsese's glittering career, but this is slick entertainment that most filmmakers could only dream of. **JG**

BLUE VELVET 1986

Now it's dark.

43 After studio interference on *Dune*, David Lynch reunited with producer Dino De Laurentiis and star Kyle MacLachlan for an art-thriller of his own making. Mixing freaky fetishism and acid-trip fairy-tale riffs with the trials of MacLachlan's Jeffrey Beaumont, *Blue Velvet* entangles character and backdrop in one filmic fabric. Colour schemes shape our responses; an ear-hole doubles *Alice In Wonderland*'s rabbit-hole as a symbolic narrative opening; Roy Orbison's 'In Dreams' is warped by context into scare-song; Dennis Hopper's monstrous Frank controls the on-screen shadows by manipulating the lights; and cast/character divisions blur. MacLachlan mirrors Lynch's warped-apple-pie persona, Isabella Rossellini breaks hearts. As for Hopper, "Dennis was Frank," Lynch proclaimed. And *Blue Velvet* is pure Lynch. **KH**



MANHUNTER 1986

Mann's hunter...

44 With its stylised lensing, non-marquee casting and gruesome subject matter, the first adaptation of Thomas Harris' *Red Dragon* wasn't a big hit despite introducing viewers to Dr Lecter (Lector in this adap and played by Brian Cox). But it has since gained cult status and spawned a franchise, TV spin-off and numerous pretenders. That's due to director Michael Mann's clinically clean storytelling as a traumatised FBI criminal profiler Will Graham (William Petersen) is brought back from retirement to track down a serial killer with the help of his last catch, the good doctor. Tracking the symbiosis between pursuer and pursued while separating them with slick colour coding (Graham is always shot with cool blue, his perp in poisonous hues), Mann's forensic nerve-jangler set the bar for future Harris adaptations. **JC**



TRUE ROMANCE 1993

So cool.

45 Boasting an incendiary energy from the pairing of Quentin Tarantino's script with Tony Scott's direction, *True Romance* gave the world one of the defining couples of '90s cinema in Clarence (Christian Slater) and Alabama (Patricia Arquette). Chances are, if you went to the movies during that time, you'd have fallen in love with at least one of them. Something of a *Badlands* update (homaged in score and Alabama's dreamy voiceover), the star-crossed lovers go on the run after accidentally stealing a suitcase full of cocaine, and memorably pinball around a host of colourful A-list character actors. Bold, bright, and packed with pop-culture references, *True Romance* offered film geeks the ultimate cypher in comic-book clerk Clarence. It took Scott a year to find the right Alabama, but Arquette was worth the wait. **MM**

GOODFELLAS 1990

Life of crime.

46 Adapted by Nicholas Pileggi and Martin Scorsese (his first screenplay credit since 1973's *Mean Streets*) from Pileggi's crime biography *Wiseguy*, this intimate epic uses jump cuts, crash zooms, freeze frames, voiceovers and wall-to-wall music to capture the full brio of the jagged prose. It is, at heart, a classic rise-and-fall gangster pic, tracking Irish-Italian mobster Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) and best pals Tommy DeVito (Joe Pesci) and James 'Jimmy' Conway (Robert De Niro) as they work their way up the New York mob hierarchy. For Scorsese, *GoodFellas* was personal: "When I grew up, some of the best entertainment I had was listening to tough guys tell stories with great humour on street corners. I brought a documentary attitude [to *GoodFellas*]. The star of the movie is a way of life, not a character." **JG**



WISE GUYS

Ray Liotta, Robert de Niro, Paul Sorvino and Joe Pesci.

SEVEN 1995

So good it's a sin.

47 "What's in the box?" If New Line had got their way it wouldn't have been Gwyneth Paltrow's head and *Seven* wouldn't have ended with one of the most disturbing scenes in cinema history. David Fincher had to fight for the film's famously downbeat climax, and his instinct was on the money – eschewing a happily ever after elevated *Seven* from a superior thriller into an all-time classic. Described by Fincher as more a "meditation of evil" than a police procedural, the insidious tale of two detectives hunting a serial killer who models his murders on the seven deadly sins established a scuzzy stylistic template for the next decade of thrillers, while Andrew Kevin Walker's bleak script not only brought Brad Pitt's idealistic hero to the edge of darkness, but pushed him over the precipice. **JF**



RASHOMON 1950

Points of view...

48 Winning the prestigious Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1951, *Rashomon* introduced western audiences to not just the cinema of Akira Kurosawa, who would go on to make such masterpieces as *Seven Samurai*, *Throne Of Blood* and *Ran*, but Japanese cinema in general, most prevalently the films of Kenji Mizoguchi and Yasujiro Ozu. With just three sets and minimal sound design, Kurosawa whips up a kinetic, magnetic drama, telling of a murder and rape in feudal Japan from differing perspectives as four witness testimonies conflict, each driven by self-interest. The musings on truth and human nature are a little didactic, but the structure was revolutionary and few filmmakers before or since have moved a camera with the muscularity and fluidity that Kurosawa brings to his action sequences. **JG**

STAGECOACH 1939

The Ford is with you

49 "Danger holds the reins as the devil cracks the whip!" panted the tagline for the first great western of the talkie era. It was legendary helmer John Ford who truly cracked that whip, crafting a movie whose galloping frontier thrills are matched by brilliantly observed character work, the showstopping grandeur of Monument Valley – Ford's eternal backdrop – balanced by the tensions inside a coach crossing perilous Apache territory. It's the film that made a star of John Wayne but its impact resonates beyond that icon-making turn – Orson Welles thought it so masterly he watched it 40 times as prep for *Citizen Kane*, and Quentin Tarantino homaged its claustrophobic ensemble narrative in *The Hateful Eight*. When the 7th Cavalry finally arrives in a heart-stirring flurry of flags and bugles, it's not a cliché: it's glorious. **NSe**



MILLER'S CROSSING 1990

Two tribes go to war.

50 Not only is *Miller's Crossing* one of the Coen brothers' very best, we can also thank it for the equally A-game *Barton Fink* – the boys got writer's block while penning this twisty-turny gangster movie, and so took a three-week break to bang out *Barton Fink*, about, you guessed it, a blocked screenwriter. Set in the Prohibition era and tipping its fedora to '30s crime literature, *Miller's Crossing* tracks an escalating gang war between rival mobsters led by Leo (Albert Finney) and Caspar (Jon Polito). Tom (Gabriel Byrne) is Finney's right-hand man, and his secret love affair with his boss' mistress, Verna (Marcia Gay Harden), further complicates matters – more so because she's the sister of Bernie (John Turturro), who Caspar wants killed. Stylish, inventive and a verbal firework show throughout. **JG**

RIO BRAVO 1959

No doves for Hawks...

51 Conceived as a riposte to what he saw as the liberal-lefty pieties of Carl Foreman's *High Noon*, Howard Hawks' autumnal chamber western – like so many of his films – celebrates camaraderie. Small town Sheriff John T. Chance (John Wayne) has killer Joe Burdette (Claude Akins) banged up in the local jail; the killer's brother, the local big rancher, is set on springing him. Backing Chance are Dude (Dean Martin), his ex-deputy and a recovering drunk, the crippled Stumpy (Walter Brennan), untried youngster Colorado Ryan (crooner Ricky Nelson), and glamorous widow Feathers (Angie Dickinson). Can this ill-assorted bunch see off a band of armed heavies? Well, what do you think? Quentin Tarantino claimed he uses this movie as a date-breaker: "When I'm getting serious about a girl, I show her *Rio Bravo* – and she better fucking like it." **PK**

CARLITO'S WAY 1993

The going-straight story.

52 Ten years after *Scarface*, Brian De Palma and Al Pacino re-teamed for more hair-raising excitement: and no, we don't just mean Sean Penn's startling perm. Yet this is by no means a retread of the earlier gangster classic. Swapping Tony Montana's dazzling white suit for more somber black leather, a poignant Pacino dials it down as Carlito Brigante, an ex-con trying to go straight after returning to his old neighbourhood. Naturally, just when he thinks he's out, he's pulled back in... Kicking off with Carlito taking a bullet then flashing back to fill us in, this is a '40s noir in '70s threads, underappreciated at time of release yet showcasing some of De Palma's coolest moves: just when you thought *The Untouchables* was the last word in step-based set-pieces, along comes cinema's greatest-ever escalator chase. **ML**

BIG BREAKS

Carlito (Al Pacino) struggles to stay out of trouble during a game of pool.



TAXI DRIVER 1976

Sleazy does it.

53 “Much of *Taxi Driver* arose from my feeling that movies are really a kind of dream-state, or like taking dope,” said Martin Scorsese, and Michael Chapman’s camera floats down the filthy, neon-soaked streets of Manhattan like an avenging angel as Vietnam vet Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro) sets about cleaning up the streets. There’s a hazy beauty and romanticism to *Taxi Driver*, amplified by Bernard Herrmann’s jazz score, and Scorsese wears his European influences on his blood-crusted khaki sleeve. But *Taxi Driver* is also an angry young man’s film: Paul Schrader wrote it in 10 days with a loaded gun on his desk; Scorsese identified with Bickle’s alienation, paranoia and rage; and John Hinckley Jr. so fixated on Jodie Foster, who plays teen prostitute Iris, attempting to assassinate President Reagan in 1981 to impress her. **JG**



CLEANING UP
Bickle (Robert De Niro)
has words with pimp
Sport (Harvey Keitel).

FATAL ATTRACTION 1987

Bunnies beware...

54 Dubbed “a post-feminist AIDS thriller” by Brian De Palma, Adrian Lyne’s water-cooler movie tells of married Manhattan attorney Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas) who has a brief fling with an editor (Glenn Close) only to see her go psycho. Grossing \$320m around the globe, it skewered issues of marriage, adultery and the nuclear family en route to becoming a cultural phenomenon. In the first week of its US release alone, one psychoanalyst revealed that seven out of 10 patients with marital problems were talking about the movie. Close’s Alex Forrest became the most hated woman in America – even coining the phrase ‘bunny boiler’ when she kills the Gallaghers’ pet rabbit. It may not be subtle but Lyne’s use of a rollercoaster in one scene says it all. **JM**



TRAFFIC 2000

The thin white line.

55 Though he was passed over by just about every major Hollywood studio (Fox wanted Harrison Ford as the lead and substantial script changes; everybody else got twitchy about the subject matter), Steven Soderbergh’s refusal to compromise with this ambitious War On Drugs drama paid off big time. Elegantly weaving together three stories – not to mention over 135 speaking parts and 110 different shooting locations – the famously hands-on director (Soderbergh operated the camera for the majority of the shoot) cuts between Mexico, Ohio and San Diego as cop Javier Rodriguez (Benicio Del Toro) is hired to take out a cartel hitman. Meanwhile, a judge (Michael Douglas) appointed to tackle drug control discovers his daughter is an addict; and a drug lord’s pregnant wife (Catherine Zeta-Jones) hires a hitman to kill a snitch. Complicated, brutal, uncompromising. **JW**

PERFORMANCE 1970

Sympathy for the devils.

56 A hallucinogenic tale of identity and transference set in swinging London, *Performance* is not your average thriller. But this anti-establishment yarn proved so disturbing that star James Fox gave up acting for the next decade. He plays Chas, a London gangster who hides out in the Chelsea pad of fading rock star Turner (Mick Jagger). Co-directed by Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg, it feels like a direct descendant of Joseph Losey’s subversive drama *The Servant* as personalities merge and identities are swapped. Off-camera, the production was awash with free love and drugs; as set designer Christopher Gibbs noted, they were all interested in “the transforming quality of hallucinogenics” while outtakes of the (allegedly not faked) sex scenes involving Rolling Stones lead singer Jagger later won an award at the Amsterdam Porn Festival. **JM**



NORTH BY NORTHWEST 1959

Thrill of the chase.

57 On the run from shadowy strangers, Cary Grant's suave ad man Roger Thornhill is put through a succession of stunning set-pieces, including dodging a crop-dusting plane and clambering over Mount Rushmore. *North By Northwest* came smack bang in the middle of Alfred Hitchcock's two most famous movies, *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, and is Hitch's most successful 'innocent man on the run' thriller, finessing the template formulated in *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *Saboteur* (1942). It captures talent at its zenith (leading man Grant, co-stars Eva Marie Saint and James Mason, composer Bernard Herrmann, screenwriter Ernest Lehman, title sequence designer Saul Bass) and of course Hitchcock himself, whose dexterously handled action-comedy-romance-thriller (!) would point the way for all that came after it – including the James Bond series which debuted three years later. *RL*

FLIGHT PATH
Cary Grant runs from a case of mistaken identity.

FREEZING FARCE

William H. Macy
plays inept criminal
Jerry Lundegaard.



FARGO 1996

Kinda funny lookin’.

58 “This is a true story,” reckon the credits. Anybody familiar with the Coen brothers should know better. Actually, it’s their typically offbeat take on the ‘true story’ genre: a blackly comic morality tale of kidnapping, murder and funny accents in the Minnesota snow. A landmark in the Coens’ career, they swapped visual and verbal flamboyance for formal rigour and brought home Oscars for the whole family: Ethan and Joel for Original Screenplay, plus the latter’s wife (Frances McDormand) as Best Actress. Sure, it’s as gigglesome (“Oh, I just think I’m gonna barf...”) and gruesome (the wood chipper!) as you’d expect from the guys behind *Miller’s Crossing*. Yet McDormand’s pregnant, optimistic Marge Gunderson adds a plaintive note of low-key, likeable realism. Belying the brothers’ reputation for shallow irony, is that a newfound emotional depth in their work? Yah, you betcha. **SK**



CASABLANCA 1942

Here’s looking at a classic.

59 If a film’s quotability is a testament to its cultural significance, it’s no shocker that *Casablanca* routinely features on lists of the all-time greats. Six lines appear in the AFI’s top 100 movie quotes, even if one or two are regularly misquoted. Humphrey Bogart has never been more iconic – in that white tuxedo jacket that’s been homaged by Bond and Indy – as Rick Blaine, an expat running a nightclub in Casablanca during World War 2. Ingrid Bergman is Ilsa Lund, the former flame who shows up in Rick’s gin joint looking for safe passage with her husband. Filmed almost exclusively on the Warner Bros’ backlot, Michael Curtiz’s wartime romance melds nostalgia with noir, the monochrome lensing creating a uniquely heightened reality. Winning Oscars for Best Picture, Screenplay and Director, this stageplay adaptation is one you’ll always happily play again. **MM**

MEAN STREETS 1973

Marty’s mob.

60 We have John Cassavetes to thank for *Mean Streets*. Unimpressed by Martin Scorsese’s previous movie, the indie director suggested he should “just try and do something different”. So Scorsese revisited his New York roots (albeit, ironically, shooting mostly in LA) to tell the episodic (mis)adventures of low-level gangster Charlie (Harvey Keitel) and loose-trigger pal Johnny Boy (Robert De Niro). Scorsese stirred together his lifelong passions: Catholic spirituality, profane masculinity (“what the fuck’s a mook?”), rock music from the Rolling Stones to the Ronettes; and every filmmaking trick he knew. The result kickstarted his career, provided a literally explosive introduction to his legendary sparring partner De Niro, and became the model for any Mob movie that prefers streetwise rough-and-tumble to *The Godfather*’s operatics. **SK**

OUT OF SIGHT 1998

Comeback kings.

61 The washed-up wunderkind director and the guy who swapped *ER* for *Batman & Robin*. Who'd have thunk Steven Soderbergh and George Clooney would find salvation making the 1990s' coolest, sexiest thriller? Arguably besting *Get Shorty* and *Jackie Brown* as cinema's finest Elmore Leonard adap, this is an expert shuffle between romance and crime, as Jennifer Lopez's Federal Marshall hunts (and falls for) Clooney's escaped con. Soderbergh finds his groove here, melding maverick tastes (colour-coded visuals, scrambled chronology) with crowd-pleasing insouciance, via Leonard's droll dialogue, David Holmes' jaunty electro-funk score and a peak-indie cast. Clooney, similarly, perfects that now-familiar blend of old-school suavity and modern self-mockery, and the soul and sizzle in his chemistry with a never-better Lopez remains undimmed. **SK**

PERSONA 1966

Decidedly non grata...

62 No small achievement, to carry a film with barely a line of dialogue – but Liv Ullmann, playing an actress struck suddenly (and seemingly voluntarily) mute, brings it off with silent eloquence. Isolated in a coastal summer-house with only her nurse Alma (Bibi Andersson) for company, she gradually usurps the other woman's personality and, like some psychological vampire, finally reduces her to babbling incoherence. At times, indeed, it plays out like the most austere of horror movies; the action climaxes in the chilling split-screen moment when the two women's faces, and personalities, merge. Andersson is captivatingly vulnerable but Ullmann, in her very first Bergman film, enters subtly and instinctively into his world. The writer-director was delighted: "Liv, like the best of all creative artists, has... enormous faith in her own intuition." **PK**

POINT BLANK 1967

Revenge served cool.

63 The 1999 Mel Gibson revenge movie *Payback* is decent enough, but this, based on the same novel – *The Hunter*, by Donald E. Westlake writing as Richard Stark – is the real deal. The story is streamlined and simple, with a mysterious man named Walker (Lee Marvin, cool as a cucumber buried in the Antarctic) being double-crossed and left for dead. Surviving, he sets out to retrieve his \$93,000, but the real prize is revenge, and Walker implacably kills his enemies one by one like some smart-suited, flesh-and-blood Terminator. Marking Brit director John Boorman's stylish Hollywood debut, *Point Blank* borrows its brio from the French New Wave and helped point the way for New Hollywood's movie brats. Martin Scorsese is a huge fan, and a *Point Blank* poster can be seen in *Mean Streets*. **JG**



BORED GAME
Andy and Red bond over checkers and talk chess in the yard.

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION 1994

The great escape.

64 The box-office flop that found a second life on VHS and barged its way on to lists of the greatest movies of all time... Everyone knows the backstory of Frank

Darabont's majestic adaptation of Stephen King's novella *Rita Hayworth And The Shawshank Redemption* (lifted from collection *Different Seasons*, where it nestled alongside *The Body*, which itself got a stardust adaptation into *Stand By Me*). Unfolding over two decades, *The Shawshank Redemption's* refusal to brush over the more brutal

elements of life in a corrupt Maine prison means the moments of unbridled joy (Mozart in the exercise yard, Andy Dufresne's startling escape) feel all the more satisfying. But at heart it's one of cinema's great tales of hope and friendship – narrated with warmth by Morgan Freeman, before such a thing became a cliché. **RE**

PARASITE 2019

Upstairs, downstairs.

65 Director Bong Joon-ho's darkly comedic, socially conscious thriller became the first-ever non-English language film to win the Best Picture Academy Award in 2020 – a richly deserved distinction. The film follows a penniless family in South Korea who inveigle their way into the fancy house and lives of a wealthy family by posing as skilled workers. A sophisticated, empathetic depiction of the inhumane consequences of income inequality, *Parasite* has smarts to bolster its riotously entertaining, wholly unpredictable genre thrills. On the awards trail in 2020, director Bong memorably chided American audiences, saying: "Once you overcome the one-inch tall barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films". The barrier undoubtedly still exists, but to *Parasite*'s credit, no film has come closer to knocking it down. **JF**



NOTORIOUS 1946

Not a rapper in sight.

66 *Notorious* sees Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman as US agents who must infiltrate a band of Nazis led by Claude Rains in South America. A cruel, twisted film, it is also one of the most cunningly crafted suspenseers in Alfred Hitchcock's canon, with every scene in the first half of the film given a corresponding scene in the second. Example? The very first scene, in which a tipsy woman is escorted from a house party, is mirrored by the very last one, where the same woman, who has been drugged, is nervily rescued from the house where she has been kept prisoner. Light has become darkness, all while the plot has built up finger-cracking suspense. Grant and Bergman were never better, dark emotions writhing behind their eyes as their faces are shot in luminous close-up. **RL**



VERTIGO 1958

High anxiety.

67 When William Friedkin described Hitchcock's style as "more than the sum of its parts", he nailed *Vertigo*. Despite its Best Film Ever rep, the suspense Buddha's riff on Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac's dream-novel hasn't been calcified by dusty reverence: even now, its parts alchemise in a fashion that unsettles all certainties, plunging us into subtextual freefall. James Stewart was never more ambiguous, an everyman-ish turned neurotic as the cop with Kim Novak issues. Is the film his dying dream, a rewriting of Hollywood masculinity, a director's confessional, a dismantled noir? However you cut it, Hitch marshals radical halfway-point twists, "trombone shot" innovations (track-away, zoom in), Bernard Herrmann's lushly hysterical score and Robert Burks' near-sickly cinematography to draw us in, only to keep his secrets tantalisingly out of reach. **KH**

CITIZEN KANE 1941

Awesome Orson...

68 Awarded a carte blanche contract by RKO that made him the envy of all Hollywood, a 25-year-old Orson Welles changed cinema with this tale of newspaper tycoon Charles Foster Kane. The meaning of Kane's dying word, "Rosebud," is the hook, but the famous final shot reveals little while ostensibly revealing all. A man's life cannot be neatly wrapped and related, and the film's intricate flashback structure is likewise a jigsaw, while Kane's ego and bravado is mirrored by the technical showmanship: deep focus, extreme angles, overlapping dialogue, ceilinged sets, and long, mobile takes. Jealousy meant it only won a single Oscar (Original Screenplay, for Welles and Herman J. Mankiewicz), while media mogul William Randolph Hearst, on whom the film is based, ensured it failed at the box office. **JG**



LE SAMOURAÏ 1967

Killing time.

69 With his icy beauty, Alain Delon has never been better cast than as Jean-Pierre Melville's impassive hitman, the epitome of lethal cool. The film's a study of solitude, of emotional detachment that approaches autism – though Melville himself called it "the analysis of a schizophrenic by a paranoiac, because all creators are paranoiac". Before he kills, Jef Costello (Delon) ceremoniously puts on white gloves – murder as a surgical operation, antiseptic in its precision. The ending links straight back to the film's title: Jef's death is a form of harakiri. The influence of *Le Samouraï* has been fertile and wide-ranging – fragments of its DNA show up in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, Walter Hill's *The Driver*, Paul Schrader's *American Gigolo* and Winding Refn's *Drive* – but none have yet quite recaptured Melville and Delon's ineffable poise. **PK**



SERPICO 1973

Cop this...

70 Sidney Lumet's corrupt-cops thriller was the first film to hint at Al Pacino's inner ham, *The Godfather* star getting to go full hippy as the honest undercover officer who takes it upon himself to weed out dirty cops in the NYPD. The film was actually shot in reverse order to allow for Pacino's hair and beard to be clipped as the production progressed, and he exerts just enough control to play 'colourful' rather than 'caricature' – the second of eight Best Actor nominations was his reward. Lumet, of course, is a master at this kind of thorny, freighted material (for more bad boys in blue, see his sprawling 1981 triumph, *Prince Of The City*), and took the action to 104 locations across four of New York's five boroughs in a quest for authenticity. **JG**



SLIPPERY SOAP

Edward Norton's narrator descends into violence and oblivion with Brad Pitt's soap salesman.

FIGHT CLUB 1999

Soap and glory.

71 “This movie couldn’t be further from offering any kind of solution,” said David Fincher, nimbly dodging blows aimed by conservative critics. Trading punches between Ed

Norton’s wage-enclaved insomniac and Brad Pitt’s limber anarcho-punk, Fincher’s riff on Chuck Palahniuk’s scurrilous satire of ‘stuff’ fetishism and men’s movements is too fast for its doubters. Fincher flirts with the irresponsible allure of Pitt’s Nietzsche-spouting nihilist, only to then visit more interesting places, plunging into a messed-up, pre-millennial mindset where the

grounds of fantasy/reality wobble like skyscrapers ready to fall. Never dreadingly literal enough to offer answers, *Fight Club* instead plays like a whip-sharp, darkly comic warning; *Dr. Strangelove* for the 2000s. Although it was a near-flop upon release in 1999, it flourished on DVD and now looks prophetic in its auguries of fiscal collapse and regressive politics. **KH**

TIGHTENED GRIP
Michael Corleone
takes control in *The*
Godfather: Part II.



THE GODFATHER: PART II 1974

Another offer you can't refuse.

72 Based on historical material stripmined from Mario Puzo's 1969 novel, while continuing the story, *The Godfather: Part II* is a rare prequel/sequel that's as celebrated as the original. Just when he thought he was out (almost offering Scorsese the director's chair), Coppola found himself pulled back in, assembling perhaps the greatest cast of the 1970s. Robert De Niro (who else?) replaces Marlon Brando as the (young) Don Corleone, Al Pacino smoulders with muddled malevolence as his son/heir Michael, Diane Keaton and John Cazale provide heart as Michael's wronged wife and wayward brother, and Robert Duvall's Tom Hagen tries (and fails) to hold it all together – even legendary acting teacher Lee Strasberg appears. The only one missing is Brando, who failed to show for a flashback scene. **MG**



BONNIE AND CLYDE 1967

They rob banks.

73 Nobody in Hollywood thought Robert Benton and David Newman's mercurial screenplay about Depression-era bank robbers Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker was filmable. Even the writers, influenced by French cinema, reckoned it needed Godard or Truffaut to do justice to its hopscotch race through comedy, romance and violent action. Yet star/producer Warren Beatty and director Arthur Penn sensed an opportunity to tie 1930s history to the 1960s headlines of civil rights and Vietnam, using counter-cultural cool and squib-spurting shootouts. Critics complained... and then came back for more, with *Newsweek*'s Joe Morgenstern retracting his initial, negative review. Ecstatic audiences copied Faye Dunaway's fashions. And a new generation of risk-taking talents took notice of Penn's dizzying revue of the medium's possibilities, not least a cast of rising stars that included Hackman and Wilder. **SK**

TOUCH OF EVIL 1958

Welles' border-line masterpiece.

74 The three-and-a-half minute tracking shot that opens Orson Welles' last American picture is not the only technical flourish to be found in this twisty saga of corruption and intrigue on the US-Mexican border; according to star Charlton Heston, it was also the first film to feature a driving scene inside an actual moving car. Not bad going for a flick that started off as a B-picture before being subjected to Welles' outsized personality both behind and in front of the camera. Welles claimed he had asked producer Al Zugsmith for the "worst script" he had in order to prove he could make a decent film out of anything. The proof is in the pudding, something Orson was clearly partial to judging from the grotesquely toad-like corpulence of detective alter-ego Quinlan. **NS**

THE BIG SLEEP 1946

WTF-dunnit.

75 Not content with giving us the definitive Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon*, Humphrey Bogart presents a definitive Philip Marlowe in a classic noir that wisely subordinates the complexities of Raymond Chandler's labyrinthine novel to the sizzling sexual chemistry between Bogie and wife-to-be Lauren Bacall. A postponed release date enabled director Howard Hawks to punch up their saucy banter at the expense of scenes that would have clarified the mystery; by the end, even the author was confused as to how one of his creations came to meet his maker. Not that the audience cared, seduced as they were by the sparkling dialogue, the rich supporting cast (Martha Vickers is a particular stand-out as Bacall's thumb-sucking sister) and the sophisticated strain of smarts that informs every juicy on-screen interaction. **NS**

CHINATOWN 1974

Troubled waters.

76 "If everything ends in a happy way, you forget the film over dinner," Roman Polanski said. No chance of that with his Cali-noir: Faye Dunaway's fate as Evelyn Mulwray has been wrecking dinners for years. Alarm bells ring as soon as Jack Nicholson's gumshoe J.J. Gittes is warned, "You never learn, do you, Jake?" His nose slit by a vicious knife-man (Polanski), Gittes still insists on sniffing out a conspiracy of stolen water, murder, adultery and corruption to its bitter end. The shoot was supposedly fractious but the plotting is taut: at the climax, the pieces lock tight with the precision of Greek tragedy, aided by killer casting, economic direction and the toned vernacular of a script by Robert Towne, who later declared himself "very glad" that Polanski demanded a darker ending. "Forget it, Jake"? Impossible. **KH**

THE 39 STEPS 1935

The right 'cuff

77 Not only one of the best of Hitchcock's early, pre-Hollywood phase, but one of his finest, full-stop. The set-up is archetypal Alfred: an innocent everyman (Robert Donat's Richard Hannay) goes on the run, hooking up – literally – with a cool dame (Madeleine Carroll's Pamela, setting the benchmark for Hitchcock's blondes). Bravura set-pieces ensue, from the hyper-tense (the music-hall murder that motors the plot; our hero's apparent mid-movie demise) to the hyper-verbal (Hannay improv-ing a speech about someone he doesn't know). Then there's the slapstick kink of our hero and heroine's extended handcuffing – much imitated, never out-choreographed. There have been almost as many adapts of John Buchan's source novel as there are steps, but none has measured up to the pace and playfulness of Hitch's take, an anything-but-dry run for *North By Northwest*. **ML**



SAY AHHHHH!
Babe (Hoffman) is tortured by Nazi war criminal Dr. Szell (Olivier).

MARATHON MAN 1976
"Is it safe?"

78 Reteaming with his *Midnight Cowboy* director John Schlesinger, Dustin Hoffman stars as a graduate history student who gets caught up in an international conspiracy involving pilfered diamonds, a shadowy government agent and a Nazi war criminal. It's a superior thriller that makes great use of its grimy New York locations and the post-Watergate paranoia that then shrouded America, but it's now most 'fondly' remembered for Laurence Olivier's crude torture methods, which did for dentists what *Jaws* did for bathing. Everyone knows the "Why don't you just try acting?" behind-the-scenes anecdote, but a lesser known fact is that *Marathon Man* was the first theatrical release to employ Steadicam – Garrett Brown's revolutionary invention was used extensively in chase scenes and to track Hoffman jogging around NYC. **JG**

THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY 1980

Gangster's paradise.

79 "Our country's not an island anymore, we're a leading European state and I believe that this is the decade that Laaandaaan will become Europe's capital," preaches Harold Shand (Bob Hoskins), an East End geezer trying to go straight in John Mackenzie's Thatcherite gangster flick, based on Barrie Keeffe's script. Despite the *Sweeney*-ish setting – all boozers, bad teeth and casual racism – it's so eerily prescient it could be a rejoinder to the Brexit campaign. Amid IRA bombs and mafia threats, Shand and his missus Helen Mirren are trying to sell off the London Docklands to become the next Olympic site, which actually happened in 2012. Naturally, it all goes tits up, and Shand goes down fighting, the final, lingering shot showing both fear and fire in his eyes. **MG**



EASTER END
Bob Hoskins and Helen Mirren star in this cockney thriller.

SICARIO 2015

Shock and war (on drugs).

80 In a dusty Arizona squat, an FBI SWAT team are on the trail of a Mexican drug cartel when they find bodies hidden in the walls. Director Denis Villeneuve (*Prisoners*) starts as he means to go on – with a short, sharp jab to the solar plexus, and the blows keep coming right up to *Sicario*'s white-knuckle finale. Strafing expectations at every turn, the serpentine plot sees Agent Kate Macer (Emily Blunt) recruited to a special task force by CIA agent Matt Graver (Josh Brolin), who works with the 'sicario' (hitman) of the title, Alejandro (Benicio Del Toro, mesmerising).

Macer is no Clarice Starling, and there are no heroes in Villeneuve's brooding, expansive saga, which is gifted a trembling aura by composer Jóhann Jóhannsson and DOP Roger Deakins, both Oscar nominated. **JW**



UNCUT GEMS 2019

Enter Sandman.

81 Cinema can elicit a spectrum of emotions, but if you want to replicate a panic attack, watch *Uncut Gems*. Adam Sandler, in a rare dramatic turn, plays Howard Rather, a New York City jeweller with a self-destructive gambling addiction that means he just can't quit, especially when he's ahead. Directed by Benny and Josh Safdie, *Uncut Gems* might just be the most stressful 135 minutes in cinema history, the director duo constructing an inescapable pressure cooker for their infuriating anti-hero by locating him in a New York that blurs the line between reality and fiction, bouncing him from a rock to a hard place and back again. Sandler's too-rarely utilised charisma shines through – you still like Howard even after all his terrible, terrible decisions. But it's the Safdies' demonstrable skills as filmmakers which is the real diamond here. **JF**

ZODIAC 2007

American crime story.

82 David Fincher's patient and methodical crime procedural breaks every rule in the thriller book, resulting in a mesmerising slow-burner that sticks with you far longer than your standard serial-killer flick. It's hard to believe that gung-ho *Dirty Harry* was inspired by the same case – the Zodiac Killer, who plagued California on the cusp of the '60s and '70s. Jake Gyllenhaal is Robert Graysmith, the real-life newspaper cartoonist turned amateur sleuth whose books formed the basis of the screenplay. Like the real unsolved case, the film offers no easy answers, despite Fincher putting in 18 months of research. Containing a number of impressive VFX shots you'd never notice (including the digital de-aging of San Francisco and *that* taxi tracking shot), *Zodiac*'s restraint is what makes it so chillingly effective. **MM**



HEAT 1995

Mann on fire.

83 “It’s not derived from other cinema, it’s based on research,” barked Michael Mann of his precision-honed crime epic, a scalpel-sculpted upgrade of his own *LA Takedown*. Mann drew on historical cases, consulted with former career criminal Eddie Bunker and rode with LA cops to bring conviction to his psycho-study of Mann-ly professionals and the codes they live by. Sharing a screen for the first time, Robert De Niro and Al Pacino get its minimalist measure, playing their caffeinated cop/criminal confrontation with the hard-boiled restraint of Method monks. Even Pacino’s trademark up/down volume control for the interrogation scene is purposeful. “That’s street theatre... to disorient the informant,” goes Michael’s Mann-splanation. Talking of streets, LA has rarely looked more cruelly lustrous: Chris Nolan derived *The Dark Knight*’s hard glint from here. **KH**

THE WAGES OF FEAR 1953

Drive, they said.

84 Henri-Georges Clouzot’s film, according to filmmaker and historian Basil Wright, “has some claim to be the greatest suspense thriller of all time; it has the suspense, not of mystery but of Damocles’ sword.” Four down-and-outs (Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Peter van Eyck, Folco Lulli) stuck in a squalid Latin American hellhole grab the chance of escape offered by an American oil company – \$2,000 each in return for driving two trucks laden with volatile nitroglycerine along a rutted, precipitous 300-mile road, in order to extinguish an oilfield fire. In Clouzot’s bitter view of humanity, camaraderie is non-existent; ‘every man for himself’ is the watchword. *Wages* runs well over two hours, but once the drive’s under way the tension never lets up. Forget Friedkin’s remake (*Sorcerer*); this is the real gut-clenching deal. **PK**

JACKIE BROWN 1997

Fly girl.

85 After he’d announced himself to the world with the spectacular, violent, potty-mouthed one-two of *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*, Quentin Tarantino returned with an adaptation of Elmore Leonard’s *Rum Punch*. *Jackie Brown* is decidedly more low-key than his previous movies, but all the QT hallmarks are here: a criminal underworld, clever structural shifts (this time limited to one key scene), quotable dialogue, an amazing soundtrack plundered from the depths of Tarantino’s record collection, and the revival of a faded star: in this case two, with Robert Forster and ’70s blaxploitation star Pam Grier bringing melancholic heart to proceedings. Originally tagged as Tarantino not quite firing on all cylinders, there’s now an argument to be made for this being his most mature and perhaps even best film. Accept no substitutes. **RE**



BRAND NEW BAG
Jackie Brown’s smuggling gets her tangled up in even more trouble.



BALL IN THE HOLE
On Bancini's shoulders
McMurphy demonstrates
how to dunk a basketball.

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST 1975

Crazily good.

86 Shot at a psychiatric hospital using real patients as extras, disowned by the author of the book it was based on (who later sued), rabidly improvised by an Oscar-swiping Jack Nicholson, who refused to talk to his director on-set after a pre-production bust-up... It's not hard to imagine that making *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was a head-screwy experience for all involved. But all that off-camera frisson lends an infectiously skittish energy to Miloš Forman's tragi-comedy. Heavily influenced by Truffaut and Godard, it sees crim Randle 'Mac' McMurphy (Nicholson) locked up in a psychiatric hospital, befriendng a mute Native American (Will Sampson) and disrupting the rule of the tyrannical Nurse Ratched (Louise Fletcher). Gritty and unflinching, *Cuckoo's* power lies in the quiet way it observes the fragility of the human spirit. **JW**



BOYZ N THE HOOD 1991

Urban legend.

87 "Either they don't know, don't show or don't care about what's going on in the 'hood," sighs Ice Cube's Doughboy in John Singleton's blistering drama, a gritty glimpse at life on the streets of South Central that captured the harsh reality of growing up in inner-city Los Angeles and shared it with the world. Laurence Fishburne is the dad trying to keep son Cuba Gooding Jr. on the straight and narrow in a ghetto where one wrong move can provoke a drive-by, and the forces of law and order can be just as harmful to your health as a shotgun-wielding gangbanger. Even with death knocking at the door, though, love, hope and friendship bloom in a film whose power remains undimmed, for all the violent urban knock-offs it unwittingly fathered. **NS**

THE THIRD MAN 1949

Oh, Vienna.

88 As legend amusingly has it, director William Wyler sent Carol Reed a spirit level after seeing Reed's sublimely skewed Brit-noir. His canted angles evoking a post-war world knocked off its axis, Reed portrays Vienna as a vortex of sliding moralities, where Joseph Cotten's pulp 'scribbler' finds corruption, betrayal and dirty penicillin rackets in every shadow. He also finds Orson Welles' supposedly dead Harry Lime, looking suspiciously alive... Welles' gargantuan charisma looms ominously, but this is no one-man show. He's only briefly on-screen (sometimes body-doubled by assistant director Guy Hamilton), framed by other, crisply orchestrated pleasures: Graham Greene's biting but humane script, Robert Krasker's expressionist photography, Anton Karas' indelible zither score. Adding heart, the achingly poignant fate of Alida Valli's Anna speaks volumes: in Reed's art-crafted thriller, those angular edges cut deep. **KH**

12 ANGRY MEN 1957

The verdict's in...

89 A dozen reasons to love *12 Angry Men*. It ignited Sidney Lumet's amazing career filming law and (dis)order. Reginald Rose's screenplay is a masterclass in lucid exposition. It proves that great cinema requires only a single set. It subverts the hackneyed mechanics of legal thrillers by avoiding the courtroom entirely. Henry Fonda gives his archetypal role as Juror 8. Support comes from stalwart character actors like Martin Balsam and Lee J. Cobb. Sympathetic, observant characterisation allows every character to shine. The pressure-cooker intensity is more nail-biting than most actioners. Lumet shapes arguments until they ricochet like gunfights. Boris Kaufman's cinematography is a vivid study of stress and sweat. Seeing bigots getting slapped down by common sense is hugely entertaining. Over 60 years on, its sturdy moral still resonates. **SK**

ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA 1984

Manhattan murder mystery.

90 After pioneering the spaghetti western, Sergio Leone turned to the gangster picture, adapting Harry Grey's dime novel *The Hoods* into a masterpiece. Elevating the genre to the level of myth, Leone's time-shifting tale slips between 1930s on the Lower East Side and 30 years later, as Robert De Niro's ageing Noodles returns to his old haunts to unravel what happened to his fellow hoodlums after a raid on the Federal Reserve. Featuring a haunting Ennio Morricone pan-pipes score and a stunning performance from James Woods as Noodles' slippery friend Max, it was summed up thus by Leone: "It's not the 18th part of *The Godfather* – it's not so concerned with events as sentiments." Sadly, the original release was cruelly mishandled in America, its four-hour running time trimmed to 144 minutes. **JM**

THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO 2009

Monsters, Ink.

91 Arriving as Scandi-noir took off, Niels Arden Oplev's take on the first book in Stieg Larsson's Millennium trilogy made a star of Noomi Rapace as Lisbeth Salander, the tattooed hacker who joins forces with Michael Nyqvist's crusading journalist on a missing person case. Salander is unlike any anti-heroine we'd seen before. If you have any doubts as to her mettle, check out the scene where she revenges herself upon her legal guardian after he rapes her, branding his stomach with the amateur tattoo: "I am a sadist pig and a rapist." For Rapace, those scenes were scar-inducing. "It was like we were in hell for one week," she noted. While David Fincher's stylish 2011 remake found a wider audience, Oplev's version took over \$104 million worldwide – remarkable for a Swedish-language film. **JM**



CHICAGO CREW
Eliot Ness hand picks his team to bring down Chicago gangster Al Capone.

THE UNTOUCHABLES 1987

You can't touch this.

92 Famous for *that* train station shoot-out (inspired by *Battleship Potemkin* and memorably spoofed in *Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult*), Brian De Palma's polished gangster flick channels

old-school noir while giving genre conventions a cool contemporary make-over that earned the film four Oscar nods, including a win for Sean Connery in the best supporting actor category. Sure, it takes liberties with the facts – the 11 'Untouchable' federal agents did exist, but good guy Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner) was nowhere near as clean cut – but any

ornamentation is forgiven in the face of De Palma's relentless pursuit of thrills. Even Bob De Niro isn't top dog, his Al Capone impersonation bowing to Sean Connery's crowd-pleasing appearance as the gun-toting (and inexplicably Sh-cottish) Jimmy Malone. De Palma planned a sequel called '*The Untouchables: Capone Rising*' but it was not to be. **JW**

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER 1955

Mitchum gets moody.

93 “It might have been better with a different actor in the leading role,” sniffed *The Observer* in 1955, getting it achingly wrong. If Robert Mitchum’s heavy-lidded persona needed a wake-up jolt in the ’50s, it arrived through Harry Powell, a preacher pitched by director Charles Laughton as a “diabolical shit”. As the wife-murdering Powell pursues his step-kids for the money they’re hiding, Mitchum served up a psycho-stew of sadism and repression on a flick-knife comic edge. The star confessed he’d “never felt a keener sense of trying to please a director” and Laughton rewarded him with a classic: a satire-blackened, Deep Southern gothic fairytale thriller, staged to stylised perfection. Bad reviews caused debut director Laughton to lay down his megaphone for good, but he left us with a one-off for the ages. **KH**

DIABOLICAL DISGUISE
Robert Mitchum
as murderous
preacher Powell.



THE FRENCH CONNECTION 1971

Keeping it real.

94 Gene Hackman created an Oscar-winning cinematic icon in New York cop Jimmy ‘Popeye’ Doyle, who together with his partner Buddy Russo (Roy Scheider) investigates a drug trafficking job with a French connection (Fernando Rey). Strange, then, to think that William Friedkin was strongly averse to casting Hackman, only relenting after Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, Jackie Gleason, Peter Doyle, Charles Bronson and even NY columnist Jimmy Breslin were ruled out. The performances are terrific, but the real star is the New York location-shooting – Friedkin cut his teeth making documentaries and brings grit to every frame. The highpoint is the car/train chase, a daring sequence achieved without proper permits and with accidental collisions left in. No wonder his nickname is ‘Hurricane Billy’. **JG**

THE MALTESE FALCON 1941

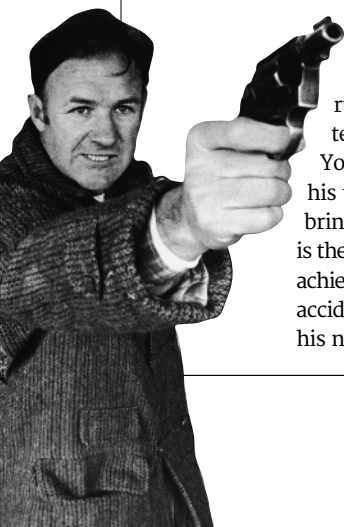
Where’s the birdie?

95 John Huston’s debut wasn’t the first film noir. (It wasn’t even the first *Maltese Falcon*, trailing two ’30s adapts of Dashiell Hammett’s novel.) But if 1940’s *Stranger On The Third Floor* is where noir began, Huston’s movie marks its true arrival. Cementing his leading-man status (post-*High Sierra*), Humphrey Bogart is the archetypal cynical-but-noble private dick, led a merry, dangerous dance by Mary Astor’s irresistible fibber. The first lady of femme fatales vies for the titular rare bird (one of the great MacGuffins) with a rogues gallery including Peter Lorre and 61-year-old first-timer Sydney Greenstreet. Even without Mr G’s screen-busting girth, *Maltese* would seem a tight squeeze – shooting mostly indoors, Huston amps the claustrophobia, proving that you don’t need to hit the streets to go down a dark path. **ML**

THE CONVERSATION 1974

A bugger’s life...

96 A between-*Godfathers* Francis Ford Coppola went ‘smaller’ but equally resonant with this surveillance classic, which does for earwiggling what 1966’s *Blow-Up* (a big influence) did for I-spy-ing. In many ways, it’s none-more-’70s: a hangdog hero (Gene Hackman’s Harry, “the best bugger on the west coast”), a faceless corporation, conspiracy, paranoia, downbeat ending... and with Watergate right around the corner, its timing was impeccable. On the other hand, its technique is timeless: sound wizards Walter Murch and Art Rochester flaunt their ear-teasing mastery in the opening scene, as Harry strives to record a couple’s private chat amid open-air hubbub. His quest to decode the meaning of the phrase “He’d kill us if he had the chance” is agonisingly addictive; this is one film about voyeurism you can’t stop watching. **ML**



IT'S OH SO QUIET

Emily Blunt has a whole bag of 'shh' with your name on it.

A QUIET PLACE 2018

Silence is golden.

97 Some films are made for munching popcorn through. Not *A Quiet Place*. Sniff, shuffle or sigh at any point during its taut 90-minute runtime and expect stern looks from everyone else in the room, because *A Quiet Place* is a film that uses sound – specifically the absence of it – to tremendous, hyper-tense effect. Starring John Krasinski (who also directs), and his real-life wife Emily Blunt, it's the story of the Abbott family who have managed to survive in a world decimated by aliens that hunt through sound thanks to their deaf daughter. It's a killer concept deftly executed, because rather than present the big picture, Krasinski zeroes in on an isolated family, inviting us to care, deeply, before ratcheting up the tension. Who knew Jim from *The Office* had it in him? **JF**



WHO IS KEYSER SÖZE?
Kevin Spacey's award-winning turn as criminal Roger "Verbal" Kint.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS 1995

Let's do the twist...

98 Before proving he had the X-factor, Bryan Singer made one of the best film noirs since the genre's heyday in the '40s and '50s. Beginning with an explosion on a docked ship, the events of the previous six weeks are then detailed to a cop (Chazz Palminteri) by criminal 'Verbal' Kint (Kevin Spacey), triggering a series of flashbacks that begin with five crims brought together by a police line-up. A classy, talky, genre-savvy affair, *The Usual Suspects* was pitched by Singer as *Double Indemnity* meets *Rashomon*, and designed to reward repeat viewings. The entire cast is terrific – yes, even Stephen Baldwin – and the 'Who is Keyser Söze?' argument still rages 21 years on. It won two Oscars at the 68th Academy Awards: Best Supporting Actor for Kevin Spacey and Best Original Screenplay for Christopher McQuarrie. **JG**



HIDDEN 2005

You've been framed.

99 *Funny Games*, *Code Unknown*, *The Piano Teacher*... Austrian writer/director Michael Haneke had already established himself as Europe's premier auteur when it came to sculpting clinically controlled, nerve-tautening thrillers, but *Hidden* (*Caché*) took his artistry – and the distress it wreaks – to new levels. Opening with a five-minute shot of the exterior of a bourgeois house that reveals itself as videotape footage when it's suddenly rewound, the theme of being watched comes into sharper focus when we learn that the abode's occupants – Anne and Georges Laurent (Juliette Binoche and Daniel Auteuil) – are receiving these ominous tapes. Who is sending them? What do they mean? And why do they make Georges act so suspiciously? Guilt (personal and national) chokes the action, and Haneke keeps things ambiguous until the very last, tantalising shot reveals everything and nothing. **JG**

SONATINE 1993

Beach boys.

100 "I wanted to show what a person does when they come to terms with death," said Japanese auteur Takeshi Kitano about his sublime tale of a yakuza named Murakawa. Set in Okinawa, it's about as meditative and melancholic as thrillers get, as Kitano's placid-looking assassin decides to lay low on a lonely stretch of beach after carrying out his orders to assist in a turf-war. Contemplating his own mortality, while tiring of the gangster life, there's innocence to Murakawa's story too, as he and the gang slip on fluorescent shirts, play games and even pull pranks on each other. It's all cut to Joe Hisaishi's playful piano score, but anyone familiar with Kitano's earlier *Violent Cop* will know bloodshed is never far away. The final sequence will unhinge your jaw. **JM**

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PART 4
HORROR

100 MUST-SEE HORROR MOVIES

Seen 'em yet?

☐ Dawn Of The Dead

☐ Ginger Snaps

☐ The Fog

☐ The Exorcist

☐ The Descent

☐ The Conjuring

☐ Lake Mungo

☐ Kill List

☐ Dead Ringers

☐ Les Diaboliques

☐ Don't Look Now

☐ Bride Of Frankenstein

☐ Eraserhead

☐ The Lighthouse

☐ Martin

☐ Black Sunday

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☐ The Cabinet Of Dr Caligari

☐ An American Werewolf In London

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☐ Henry: Portrait Of A Serial Killer

☐ Near Dark

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☐ The Wicker Man

☐ Candyman

☐ Scream

☐ The Curse Of Frankenstein

☐ Night Of The Living Dead

☐ Let The Right One In

☐ Invasion Of The Body Snatchers

☐ Ringu

☐ Dracula

☐ The Sixth Sense

☐ A Nightmare On Elm Street

☐ Psycho

☐ The Hills Have Eyes

☐ Hereditary



CUT HERE
One of the marauding
zombies gets stopped
in his tracks.

DAWN OF THE DEAD 1978

The greatest zombie movie of all time.

01 While *Night Of The Living Dead* arguably created the modern zombie movie, wresting it away from voodoo and witchcraft, *Dawn* saw it mature. Moving the action out of a single house and into the wider world, Romero shows us glimpses of a convincing and frightening apocalypse, before settling his new group of survivors down in a vast shopping mall. It's here that the film comes into its own, as they begin a new life of unexpected luxury, looting the wares of a fallen civilisation, barely noticing that they are becoming little more than complacent consumers, zombies themselves, of a different sort. The film's influence is huge. Without *Dawn* there'd be no *The Walking Dead*, no *28 Days Later...*, and certainly no *Shaun Of The Dead*. Many may have tried to wrest the bloody crown from Romero's second classic zombie chiller, including a solid remake, but none have succeeded. **WS**



GINGER SNAPS 2000

Hungry like the Wolf.

02 It was controversial before a single frame had been shot, thanks to the news that TeleFilm (a film funding body run by the Government of Canada) was to support a horror film about teenage killers, but watching it today, it's easy to see why *Ginger Snaps* was made.

Firstly, because it's difficult to connect any real-world events with the plot, which sees two death-obsessed teenage girls having to deal with the concept of lycanthropy when one of them is bitten by a werewolf. Secondly, the script is fiercely feminist, with two strong female characters at the centre of the narrative. Thirdly, the plot's central metaphor about the horrors of puberty delivers important messages in a format kids will actually enjoy. But you can ignore the politics if you wish as, above all, *Ginger Snaps* is an hugely entertaining modern horror flick. **SA**

THE FOG 1980

A real pea-souper.

03 Neither as iconic as *Halloween* or as satisfyingly nasty as *The Thing*, *The Fog* is still in the top tier of John Carpenter horror flicks. Where most ghost stories take place in dark, isolated environments, *The Fog* is set in the picturesque Californian seaside town of Antonio Bay, with long stretches of the film taking place on sun-kissed – if lonely – beaches. That doesn't stop the haunting, mind, which manifests in subtle ways during daylight, and as an army of vengeful ghosts when the clock strikes midnight and the fog rolls in. Jamie Lee Curtis and Adrienne Barbeau star, with the latter playing the local DJ who gets caught up in the spooky shenanigans. Sure, you will wonder why, when it becomes clear what's going on, nobody gets in their car and drives out of town, but when the atmosphere is as all-encompassing as it is here, you won't be complaining. **WS**

THE EXORCIST

1973

The most frightening film ever made?

04 The shoot for *The Exorcist* was notoriously fraught, with director William Friedkin firing blank shots without warning to unnerve his cast, slapping real life rev Father William O'Malley (who plays Father Joseph Dyer here) in the face before an important take and building possessed teenager Regan's (Linda Blair) bedroom set inside a freezer so her breath would be visible, but the results were electric. The first horror to be nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars (it got ten nominations and won two), based on William Peter Blatty's novel, itself inspired by a real case, the whole film is imbued with such menace that many viewers even now find it hard to stomach, as the troubled 12-year-old messes with a ouija board and invokes demon Pazuzu. A tale of Catholic guilt? A mother's paranoia over her daughter's burgeoning sexuality? Or a satanic tale of true possession? Whatever your take, *The Exorcist* remains one of the most powerful films ever made in any genre and it's to the film's credit that it can take all of these interpretations. A slew of wildly inferior sequels followed. Ignore them, and stick to the peerless, terrifying original. **PA**



FACE OF EVIL

The possessed Regan (Linda Blair) is a sight to behold.

THE DESCENT 2005

Going underground.

05 *Dog Soldiers* established Neil Marshall (these days probably better known for helming some of the very finest episodes of *Game Of Thrones*) as a talented young director with a taste for black comedy. His second feature, *The Descent*, however, was an altogether different beast. There was precious little humour to be found in this gruelling tale of a caving expedition gone very badly wrong: it starts with sudden tragedy and only gets bleaker from there. The all-female cast are put through their paces as vile “crawlers” – flesh-eating humanoids – pursue them through a network of caves, and Marshall ramps up the tension before deploying a gut-punch ending that was so potent it was entirely cut from the US version. A solid, if less punishingly effective, sequel followed in 2009. **WS**

BACK TO NATURE

A rare gasp of fresh air for Sarah (Shauna Macdonald) in *The Descent*.



THE CONJURING 2013

Ghost watch.

06 Inspired by the lives of paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren (whose writings previously led to big-screen adaptation *The Amityville Horror*), *The Conjuring* is based on supposedly true events. Thankfully, director James Wan doesn't take a traditional approach to his adaptation of the Warrens' experiences in a haunted farmhouse. This is no dry biopic – in fact, it frequently feels more like a funhouse ride than a movie.

When Roger and Carolyn Perron move out to the middle of nowhere with their five daughters, they're quickly faced with a malignant supernatural force – a dead family dog is the least of their worries. Containing as many set-pieces as an action film, a keen eye for period detail and strong performances across the board, *The Conjuring* is an instant mainstream horror classic. **SA**

LAKE MUNGO 2008

Ghosts of the past.

07 Shot in just five weeks, using unknown actors, *Lake Mungo*'s fake documentary format turns its low-budget into a strength, creating a film that's so naturalistic it frequently feels real. As with *The Blair Witch Project*, *Mungo*'s performers weren't given a script, only outlines for scenes, telling the story of the family of 16-year-old Alice Palmer, a young girl who drowned while swimming with her family in Australia, via a series of improvised interviews. Alice appears to be haunting the family, with her teen brother Matthew managing to capture images of her on camera.

As much an exploration of grief as it is a straight horror movie, *Mungo* has some of the scariest scenes in horror history, and some of the saddest. It adds up to a film that's as haunting as its monster and an experience that will stay with you long after the final moments. **SA**

KILL LIST 2011

A real cult movie.

08 Why is a film about two hitmen on our horror list? To explain too much would take away from the impact of Ben Wheatley's second film but know this: its combination of northern grit, violence and occult conspiracy makes for one of the most original films the UK has produced in many a year.

Jay (Neil Maskell) and Gal (Michael Smiley) are former soldiers who have turned to contract killing to make ends meet. Over a dinner party they accept a new job – get in, kill three people, get out, simple. But as they notch names off their list, they begin to follow a path that leads to a mysterious wood and someone or *something* known as “the Hunchback”... High on atmosphere, low on explanations, it's a film that conjures a potent sense of occult menace and, due to its grounding in the everyday, feels terrifyingly real. **WS**





DEAD RINGERS 1988

Two's a crowd...

09 Jeremy Irons gives a flawless double performance as Toronto-based twin gynaecologists Beverley and Elliot Mantle in David Cronenberg's ingeniously twisty (and twisted) psychological drama. Using subtle nuances of expression and posture, Irons skilfully differentiates his twin roles, never leaving us in any doubt which of the brothers we're looking at. Elliot is self-confident, outgoing, successful with women; Beverly is shy and reclusive, dominated by his brother, who casually passes his women – who are generally his patients – on to Beverly when he tires of them. But then one patient, Claire (Genevieve Bujold), threatens to come between them when Beverly falls for her. Inspiration for the film was drawn from the real-life case of the Marcus brothers, twin Manhattan gynaecologists whose decadent private life became public knowledge in 1975. **PK**

LES DIABOLIQUES 1955

Revenge from beyond the grave.

10 One of the greatest films Hitchcock never made (in fact, Hitch *did* want to make it, but couldn't get the rights to the book on which it was based, *She Who Was No More* by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac) *Les Diaboliques* is twist-filled, shocking and gripping.

The plot focuses on a woman, Christina (Véra Clouzot) trapped in an unhappy, abusive marriage, with her husband Michel (Paul Meurisse), who is open about his mistress Nicole (Simone Signoret). But, when Christina forms a friendship with Nicole, the pair conspire to murder the husband. But, as they will soon find out, some men can torture their victims, even after they're gone. Vividly shot in stark black and white, containing some images so horrifying they freeze in the brain, *Les Diaboliques*' intensity was a turning point for French horror cinema. **SA**

DON'T LOOK NOW 1973

Lady in red.

11 You'll know the iconography of *Don't Look Now*, even if you've never seen the film. Venice. A hooded child in red. Donald Sutherland running around like crazy. *That sex scene...* Thankfully, Nicolas Roeg's tale of grief, psychic powers and a knife-wielding dwarf is much more than just some strong imagery. Sutherland and Julie Christie are both brilliant and heartbreaking as John and Laura, the bereaved couple who travel to Venice the year after their young daughter Christine drowns (in a prologue that remains almost unbearably painful to watch). Just as they're beginning to rebuild their lives together, however, John begins to see fleeting glimpses of a child who may be Christine. It all builds to one of the most famous climaxes in cinema history – and no, we're still not talking about *that sex scene*. **WS**



RED ALERT
John (Donald Sutherland)
gets there too late to
save his daughter.

ELECTRIC 'DO

Elsa Lanchester as the Bride – she also played Mary Shelley in the film.

BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN 1935

Hair-raising horror.

12 Possibly the first ever movie sequel to better its predecessor, *Bride Of Frankenstein* is funnier, scarier and emotionally richer than the 1931 original. Many movies of the time haven't weathered well. *Bride*, however, still feels as daisy-fresh as when director James Whale unleashed it in 1935. It has an irreverent style, veering from camp to melodrama to deathly serious to the blackly comic, and all within the space of its slender 75-minute running time. While many movies of the period are stiff and restrained, *Bride Of Frankenstein* feels wild and profane. It feels *modern*.

Its influence still looms large. Jack Pierce's searingly iconic make-up is still the go-to design for Frankenstein masks, while Elsa Lancaster's electro-haired Bride is one of the most recognisable characters in cinema history. Which is extra amazing, considering she doesn't even have one line. **SOB**



ERASERHEAD 1977

In Heaven, everything is fine.

13 David Lynch's B&W debut drew inspirations from art (Franz Kafka, Nikolai Gogol, Francis Bacon) and life (living in a troubled part of Philadelphia) and fashioned them into one of the most nightmarish and unforgettable films imaginable. The story revolves around tortured soul Henry (Jack Nance), living in an industrial hellhole and trying to raise a mutant baby who looks like a skinned lamb.

Clogged with surreal imagery – a cooked chicken that wriggles and oozes blood, a woman who lives behind the radiator – and discordant sound design, *Eraserhead* is a nightmare in a damaged brain.

If you want to know the true strangeness of the brain that dreamt it up, consider what Lynch said in 2014: "I love the world of *Eraserhead*. I would love to live in that world." **JG**



MAYBE A BABY
Henry (Jack Nance) looks after a child in his strange and disturbing life.

THE LIGHTHOUSE 2019

Island living.

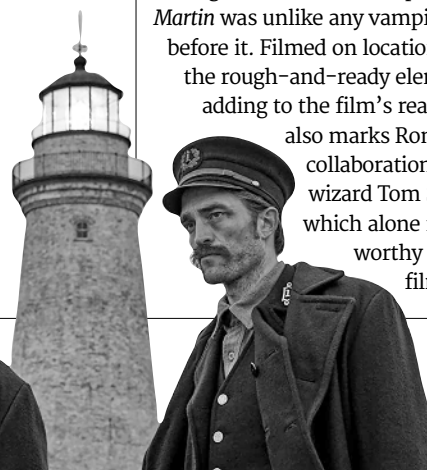
14 *The Lighthouse* is probably the only film in this list that contains Willem Dafoe emphatically farting, so never let it be said that this 1890s-set story about two lighthouse keepers who go mad off the mainland takes itself too seriously. Starring Dafoe as an experienced wickie and Robert Pattinson as a young contractor, it's a perfectly cast, performance-powered chamber piece that plays to its stars' considerable strengths. For authenticity, the script is full of period-accurate vernacular and the film was shot in black-and-white, with 1930s Baltar lenses, and in a claustrophobic 1.19:1 aspect ratio. The production even constructed a 70ft lighthouse in Southern Nova Scotia, as no existing structures suited their needs. You'll never look at a tin of beans the same way again. **JF**



MARTIN 1977

Romero's ignored masterpiece.

15 If you're a movie fan, you've likely seen George A Romero's *Night Of The Living Dead*, but you might not have seen *Martin*. Which is a shame, especially as Romero considers it his best work. It follows the titular character, a young man (John Amplas) so fascinated with vampires, he believes he is one. We join him as he takes his obsession to its logical conclusion and begins to drink human blood. Retaining the social satire of Romero's zombie movies, but adding a sensitive central performance, *Martin* was unlike any vampire movie before it. Filmed on location, with the rough-and-ready elements adding to the film's realism, it also marks Romero's first collaboration with effects wizard Tom Savini, which alone makes it worthy of a place in film history. **SA**



BLACK SUNDAY 1960

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

16 Though better known through later giallo works such as *Blood And Black Lace* and the subversive slasher *Bay Of Blood*, Mario Bava's supernatural witch horror remains the ultimate in European gothic. A stark monochrome tribute to 1930's Universal iconography, Bava's eye for the exquisite is evident throughout. The textbook tropes of cobweb strewn tombs and horse-drawn carriages through haunted forests conjures a familiar portrayal of classic horror, right down to the thunderclaps and gloomy clarinet score. But it's not simply elegantly handsome. Bava uses every cinematic technique at his disposal for this full-bloodied revenge tale. Through quick zooms, dissolves, POV shots, slo-mo and framing, he draws as much terror from the material as he can get away with, including some surprisingly graphic gore sequences for the time. **MH**

WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS 2014

Being inhuman.

17 So great it got director Taika Waititi the *Thor: Ragnarok* gig, *What We Do In The Shadows* is one of the decade's funniest fantasy-comedies. Its premise is so brilliant we can't believe it hasn't been done before: the film follows a group of immortal vampires having to deal with the petty politics of a flat-share, just like the rest of us. Shot in a documentary format recalling mockumentary classics such as *This Is Spinal Tap*, *Shadows* plays the plot straight, but, as we're following a fanged gang of utter morons, hilarity ensues.

The naturalistic tone comes from a mixture of improvised scenes and non-professional performances (Stu Rutherford thought he was hired to the film as a computer analyst, not an actor), creating an atmosphere that'll keep the film as immortal as its subjects. **SA**

TRUE BLOOD

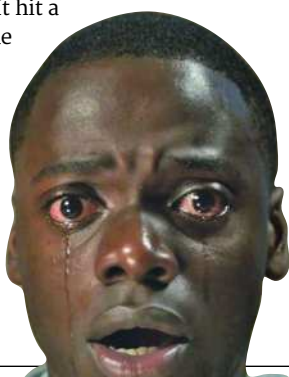
Viago (Taika Waititi) is in need of Mr. Sheen.



GET OUT 2017

Meet the scare-rents.

18 The horror genre has long been a vehicle for filmmakers to smuggle social commentary in front of an unassuming Friday night crowd, and there's no better example of this tradition from the 2010s than Jordan Peele's directorial debut, *Get Out*. Peele's exploration of liberal ignorance highlighted a far more insidious, prevalent and chillingly acceptable form of racism centred on America's white middle class. You know, the kind of people that publicly declare, "I would have voted for Obama for a third term if I could," while kidnapping young, black men and hijacking their bodies. It hit a nerve (clearly, the film made \$255m on a \$4.5m budget), while Peele established himself as a genre filmmaker to be reckoned with – the sight of a powerless Daniel Kaluuya crying as his mind slips into the Sunken Place is one of the decade's defining images. **JF**



THE MIST 2007

They didn't... they couldn't?!

19 If there's a single moment that lodges itself in the darkest recesses of the brain after watching unforgettable Stephen King adaptation *The Mist* it's that gut-punch ending, a denouement so sadistically cruel it would send Annie Wilkes scarpering to her happy place. Somewhat surprisingly, it's an ending that didn't spring from the twisted imagination of King himself, but writer/director Frank Darabont – the man behind fellow King adapts *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*. *The Mist* stands shoulder to shoulder with the best horrors of the last decade. A film where the real fear comes not from its startlingly unsettling Eldritch abominations, nor that harrowing ending, but the paranoia and shocking lack of compassion that the human characters quickly resort to under extreme circumstances. **JF**

KAIRO 2001

Ghosts in the machine.

20 *Ringu*, *The Grudge* and *Dark Water* might have been the poster children for the influx of Japanese horrors that settled on the West like a bone-freezing mist in the late '90s and early noughties, but *Kairo* is the movement's masterwork. The plot sounds hoary as hell – two groups of people discover that evil spirits might be trying to invade the world through the internet – but writer/director Kiyoshi Kurosawa evidences a mastery of shadow-soaked spaces and ominous sound design to make David Lynch gasp. Slow-burn and intimate, yet building to a genuinely apocalyptic climax, *Kairo* eschews cheap shocks in favour of subtle scares, and ices the soul with its reflections on how people can become shut off and lonely despite 'connecting' through technology. The US remake arrived in 2006 and is haunting in all the wrong ways. **JG**



THE BIRDS 1963

Death from above.

21 Three years after *Psycho*, Alfred Hitchcock returned with his biggest film yet. With a \$3.3m budget he created a blockbuster horror that positively thrums with apocalyptic menace. Tippi Hedren is Melanie Daniels, a young socialite who catches the eye of Mitch Brenner (Rod Taylor). Alas, their budding romance is rather curtailed when an army of feathered fiends descend from the skies and begin viciously pecking everyone in sight. Masterfully wringing every ounce of tension from his premise, Hitchcock also provides widescreen spectacle with the assistance of animator Ub Iwerks (a veteran of Walt Disney Studios, here putting his skills to far more malicious use) helping to convey the vast scale of this avian invasion. Hitch's use of sound was innovative too. He ditched the musical score in favour of eerie electronic sound effects. **WS**

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI 1919

Trust me, I'm a doctor...

22 The first German film to make it big internationally, *Caligari* kickstarted the Golden Age of German silent cinema. And with its mix of visual stylisation and macabre subject-matter, it prefigured much that followed – not least Murnau's *Nosferatu*. It was Lang, it seems, who suggested the film's framing story, where the narrator proves to be a lunatic and the monstrous doctor is revealed as the caring asylum head. Much of the film's haunting power derives from the expressionist set designs of Hermann Warm. The scenery is blatantly painted on canvas in broad strokes, with little concern for perspective and barely an upright to be seen, as if reflecting a mind askew – while the performances of Werner Krauss as Caligari, and Conrad Veidt as his creature Cesare, seem as potently deranged as the sets. **PK**

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON 1981

A bad moon rising.

23 John Landis originally conceived his genre-jumping monster movie back in 1969 but went off to establish himself as a box office draw in Hollywood with hits like *The Blues Brothers* and *Animal House* before he could finally get it made. Financiers were worried it was too scary for a comedy and too funny for a horror. Endlessly quotable, as some American backpackers don't heed the warnings of the locals at remote pub The Slaughtered Lamb, the transformation FX remain visceral and impressive even today, bagging Rick Baker the inaugural Oscar for Best Make-up. The tube sequence in particular is petrifying, the visits from undead Jack (Griffin Dunne) and David's (David Naughton) victims are hilarious, while the ending still makes us cry. **PA**



GROWING PAINS
David Naughton undergoes the transformation from man to beast.



LOOK AWAY
Katherine Thorn (Lee Remick) doesn't realise Damien has seen worse...

THE OMEN 1976

The devil's business.

24 Back in the '70s, after *The Exorcist* scored an astonishing 10 Oscar nominations and broke box-office records, studios and stars took a sudden interest in horror, so often considered a poor relation.

The Omen cost 20th Century Fox a cool \$25m and starred Gregory Peck and Lee Remick as the parents of Damien Thorn, an infant antichrist. Like Italian gialli and US slasher movies, *The Omen* is all about the death-dealing set-pieces, and few horror movies rack up so many memorable kills – the standouts being a slo-mo decapitation of David Warner by a hurtling sheet of glass, and former *Doctor Who* Patrick Troughton being impaled by a church lightning rod. Add in a Jerry Goldsmith apocalyptic score (his only Oscar win from 18 nominations) and you have a classic that spawned three sequels and, in 2006, a godawful remake. **JG**



CAT PEOPLE 1942

Claws and effect.

25 Like so many cinema landmarks, *Cat People* was greeted coolly on its release, with its qualities only properly appreciated decades later. It contains the first example of the jump-scare technique, and it was among the first horror films to realise that what we imagine is often scarier than what we actually see, keeping its monster hidden for much of the movie's runtime. The story starts with a zoo-based meeting between Serbian-born fashion designer Irena Dubrovna and marine engineer Oliver Reed (not that one). Irena is drawing a black panther at the zoo, obsessed with the idea of a race of people who turn into giant cats when they're aroused, believing herself to be a descendent of those Satanic creatures. With a key set-piece in a swimming pool, and a clear sexual subtext, fans of *It Follows* will find much to love here. **SA**

CARNIVAL OF SOULS 1962

Stalker shocker.

26 Almost thrown away on release as part of a disposable double-feature with *The Devil's Messenger*, *Carnival Of Souls* was an obscurity almost as soon as it was out. However, a run on cable television saw the film's reputation grow, and it has been cited as a key influence on films as varied as *Eraserhead* and *Night Of The Living Dead*. The plot's deceptively simple – a woman is pursued by a mysterious man, but, watching it now, it's difficult to imagine how it wasn't instantly appreciated. Its creepy atmosphere, slow-build plot and experimental visuals all feel as modern today as when it first hit drive-ins. Sadly, director Herk Harvey never made another film. Star Candace Hilligoss only made two total. Their careers never quite recovered from the disappointment of *Carnival's* early box office, but the film will live forever. **SA**

THE ORPHANAGE

2007

Don't look behind you.

27 Often mistakenly attributed to Guillermo Del Toro, who instead steered from an executive producer role, this ghost story is actually the first feature from Spanish director JA Bayona. It's easy to see the confusion though. Just like Del Toro's work, *The Orphanage* doesn't shy away from darkness and when Laura (Belén Rueda) and her husband, Carlos (Fernando Cayo) return to Laura's former home with their adopted son, Simon, it's not long before masked children start appearing in hallways. Yet nothing is played for shock value and although all the horror tropes are there – invisible friends, the innocence of childhood turned creepy, a gothic mansion – somehow Bayona elevates the tension and terror to new heights. Like Del Toro, he understands that true fear comes from a focus on humanity and when the mystery finally unravels, childhood games reveal a much darker heart. **LB**

IN THE SACK

Tomás (Oscar Casas) might not be your first choice of boyhood friend...





GIMME SOME TOOTH
One of the nasties conjured
up from the bowels of Hell.

EVIL DEAD II 1987

Chainsaws at the ready...

28 *The Evil Dead* was a substantial success for the young Sam Raimi. Sure, it hadn't set US box offices alight, but it did make money (around \$2.6m on a budget of around \$400,000) and it operated as the perfect test run for his directorial skills. Raimi got to work on thriller *Crimewave*, consciously avoiding a sequel to his debut. When *Crimewave* tanked, however, Raimi quickly changed his tune...

Evil Dead II is a virtual remake of the original, with Bruce Campbell once again playing hapless Ash. The difference here, however, was in the tone. Where *The Evil Dead* was exuberantly nasty, *Evil Dead II* has a lightness of touch. Threequel *Army Of Darkness* would slip into straight-up comedy, but this second instalment finds the balance between freaky deadite horror and winking, chainsaw-wielding fun. *Evil Dead II* set the tone for the likes of *Shaun Of The Dead* while still working as an effective shocker. **WS**



HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER 1986

Killing time.

29 In 1984, executive producers Malik B Ali and Waleed B Ali gave director John McNaughton \$110,000 to make a horror movie with "plenty of blood". He came back with one of the most disturbing films ever made. Surprisingly, considering the instructions McNaughton received, *Portrait* isn't a gore-fest. Instead, it's a psychological exploration of real-life serial killer, Henry Lee Lucas, whose spree was so unpredictable, hundreds of deaths have been attributed to him. *Portrait* is so brutal it wasn't released uncut in the UK until 2003. But, despite the intensity of the film's events, it's the naturalistic, almost mundane, delivery of the violence that's so uniquely chilling. Critics compared McNaughton to Fritz Lang and John Cassavetes, but the former documentary maker has yet to make a movie to match this debut. **SA**

NEAR DARK 1987

From dusk...

30 As much Western as it is vampire tale, *Near Dark* wears its drifter's isolation mentality on its sun-scorched skin. Telling the tale of farmboy Adrian Pasdar's reluctant integration into a nomadic vampire family, it's a bleak love story that bristles with a simmering hostility. Saving its moments of full-blooded carnage sparingly, when it does finally explode into ultra violence, the film's raw, primeval power is felt all that more strongly. The unforgettable bar scene is one such moment. Tackling a dusty battlefield of issues including addiction, conformity and acceptance, it might share cast members with *Aliens* (thanks to the Bigelow-Cameron connection), but sadly, none of its box-office gold. Losing out to the MTV sheen of *The Lost Boys* in the popularity stakes, *Near Dark* will nevertheless always possess a more tangible bite. **MH**

REPULSION 1965

Getting on Deneuve's...

31 Polanski's chilliest film has Catherine Deneuve as a sexually repressed Belgian manicurist holed up in an apartment in South Kensington going steadily and increasingly bonkers. Lurking figures fleetingly appear in mirrors, hands grasp at her through the walls, visions of rape and violence fill her head, and in response she turns homicidal, attacking anyone unwise enough to try to enter the flat. Meanwhile, a skinned rabbit rots away on her kitchen table, attracting flies and worms. To elicit the right performance, Polanski demanded that Deneuve refrained from sex for the duration of the shoot and goaded her into violent reactions – when we see her lash out murderously with a candlestick, it's the director she's attacking. Polanski commented that "I always considered *Repulsion* the shabbiest of my films" and you can see just what he means. **PK**

THE VANISHING 1988

The banality of evil.

32 A Dutch-French co-production might suggest the stodgiest of Europuddings – but in the case of George Sluizer's psychological chiller the mix works perfectly. A young Dutch couple driving through France stop at the motorway services – and the girl vanishes. The young man's linguistic limitations exacerbate his panic as he desperately tries to find out what's become of her. Then – flashback, though not at first revealed as such, and we learn the horrifying truth behind the girl's disappearance. But the film's masterstroke is the casting of its villain. Bernard-Pierre Donnadiou plays the dullest, greyest, most unnoticeable psychopath anybody could imagine – and it's precisely the sheer suburban banality of the man, and his painstaking, step-by-plodding-step planning of his scheme, that makes him so scary. **PK**

CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST 1980

Mondo macabre.

33 *Cannibal Holocaust* tells the tale of a missing documentary team who led an expedition into the Amazon to investigate cannibal tribes. When a rescue mission uncovers their lost cans of film, containing the disturbing story of what happened to them, an American television station wrestles with the decision to broadcast.

With the found footage functioning as – almost too real – flashbacks in the context of the film, *Cannibal Holocaust* isn't just a pioneer for movies like *The Blair Witch Project* and *Paranormal Activity*, it's still a shocking film in its own right. With those 'flashback' sequences shot mainly in the Amazon rainforest of Colombia, with indigenous tribes interacting with American and Italian actors, the film has a level of brutal realism unmatched by most horror films of the era. **SA**



ON THE ROCKS
Samantha (Jocelin Donahue) might also be close to a hard place.

THE HOUSE OF THE DEVIL 2009

The neighbours are nice though.

34 The plot feels more like an urban myth than something that could sustain a full movie. A babysitter takes a job in a house in the middle of nowhere, a house

that may or may not be owned by Satanists. So far, so ordinary, but it's Ti West's direction of this simple premise that makes this film so special, both in terms of the attention to detail of its pre-*Stranger Things* '80s aesthetic, and the way West wrenches an insane amount of tension from scenes as innocuous as following a

teenage girl as she dances around a house, listening to her Walkman.

Some movies that take this kind of slow-burn approach put too much pressure on their final act to deliver a fully satisfying pay-off, but West sticks the landing, escalating the action to the astonishing peak of a shockingly bleak finale. **SA**

MASK OF DEATH
Anthony Hopkins' gruesome cannibal gave a generation nightmares.

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

1991

He's a maneater...

35 "Good morning." Two simple words that introduce us to Anthony Hopkins' Hannibal Lecter. It's fitting Lecter's first words to Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) form a greeting. He treats her like an old friend, as opposed to an FBI Agent this convicted serial killer is meeting for the first time, to help track a violent criminal. He's saying hello to her, but he might as well be talking to us – he knows he's about to become part of all of our lives forever. Lecter became such an instant pop culture icon, people who haven't even seen the film can quote key scenes verbatim. If you're one of those folks, track it down immediately, because those zeitgeisty lines are but the tip of a chilly iceberg. A five-time Oscar-winner, *Silence* is arguably the most acclaimed horror thriller ever made. It's certainly one of the best. **SA**

28 DAYS LATER... 2002

When the Wyndham blows.

36 The rampagers of Danny Boyle's visceral Brit-horror aren't actually the living dead, just infected with a Rage virus, but most of everything else about *28 Days Later...* keeps to the George Romero zombie model. There's the struggle for survival in desolate, abandoned cities; the scramble for provisions; the dog-eat-dog survivalism – and some very bloody, brutal deaths.

There's a healthy sprinkling of John Wyndham's *The Day Of The Triffids* here (especially in the eerie opening half hour exploration of deserted London), and a dash of Terry Nation there, but it's unmistakably a Danny Boyle product, with the pace and brutalism he's known for. Only the upbeat ending arguably lets it down – a misstep driven by preview audiences rejecting the original, bleak finale. **S'OB**

MISERY 1990

The fandom menace.

37 Stephen King has a long and, if we're honest, patchy history of movie adaptations. For every *Carrie* or *Stand By Me*, there's a *Dreamcatcher*. Thankfully this tale of a bestselling writer (oh Stephen...) imprisoned by his "number one fan" is a blisteringly intense game of cat and mouse. After initially taking novelist Paul Sheldon (James Caan) in after a car crash leaves him injured and stranded, Kathy Bates' obsessive Annie Wilkes turns nasty. She holds him prisoner, becomes infuriated with the direction he plans to take his popular "Misery" series in and – in one unforgettable scene – has at his ankles with a hammer to prevent his escape. It's a masterclass in menace from Bates, who moves from sympathetic to sinister and back again with ease. **WS**



RED PERIL

Cillian Murphy's Jim has all kinds of problems with public transport.



THE BURNING 1981

The eyes have it.

38 Notorious for an especially nasty throat-slitting sequence, the second of Fulci's "Gates Of Hell" trilogy is a gruesome high-point in the director's career. Sixty years ago, everyone in a New Orleans hotel vanished. Liza (Catriona MacColl) is the new owner and she's keen to make things work. She should have probably chosen a different career path, or at least another location, as it turns out her hotel is on top of one of the gates to Hell (that's what happens when you don't check TripAdvisor first...) and it's not long before tarantulas are crawling into mouths, eyes are being popped and dogs are munching down on human necks. It's schlock, undoubtedly, but hugely enjoyable schlock – and you can't fault Fulci's inventive nastiness. **WS**

MARTYRS 2008

Torture to watch.

39 There are some films that test the strongest of stomachs. *Martyrs* must rank as one of the toughest, bleakest and most deeply unpleasant films ever made. We mean that in a good way. For while Pascal Laugier's tale of Anna (Morjana Alaoui) enduring a cycle of torture and abuse at the hands of a group of mysterious captors is genuinely stomach-churning and divided critics (after an extremely rocky road to production where most studios refused to go near the film), it is not without a point. It's a deeply depressing but undeniably powerful exploration of violence that (unlike most horror films) refuses to let you enjoy the pain even a tiny bit. *Martyrs* forces you to identify with its characters and, in its own strange way, has a nihilistic morality. Just make sure there's someone around to give you a hug afterwards. **WS**

THE THING 1982

Who goes there?

40 Landing two weeks after Spielberg's *E.T.*, John Carpenter's magnum opus gave viewers a decidedly less friendly visitor, as Kurt Russell and other bearded men populating a US research station in the Antarctic fight to the death with a terrifying shapeshifter. It was make-up maestro Rob Bottin who hit upon the idea of a fluid monster – original movie *The Thing From Another World* had a man in a suit – and DOP Dean Cundey who insisted they shoot it fully lit. The extraordinary SFX explode from a claustrophobic, suspense-fuelled masterpiece, but *The Thing* flopped. "I made a gruelling, dark film, and I don't think audiences wanted to see that," mused Carpenter, before adding: "I'm very proud of the movie." Quite right: its reputation grew on VHS, and it's now rightly regarded a masterpiece. **JG**

BITE CLUB

An extraterrestrial with far more sinister intentions than Spielberg's alien.



THE WITCH 2015

Tree house of terror.

41 "It's not very scary!" is the one criticism occasionally levelled against Robert Eggers' rich examination of historical hysteria in 17th century New England. And sure, if you go into *The Witch* expecting the trappings of modern horror movies (jump scares, lashings of gore etc), you'll be disappointed. Instead, this is an ominous folktale – an occasionally cryptic, always menacing story of a missing baby, an isolated family and a goat who may just be the Devil himself... Beautifully shot (almost every frame looks like it's been adapted from a woodcut from the period) and with the dialogue in middle English, it's very much an art horror movie, but Eggers tells a strong story too. His characters are well drawn and beautifully acted. Altogether now, "Black Phillip, Black Phillip, a crown grows out his head..." **WS**



AUDITION 1999

Murder and melodrama.

42 Takashi Miike is incredibly prolific, with 100 directorial credits to his name – but *Audition* is undoubtedly his masterpiece. A reflection on gender politics in Japan, it's a surreal melodrama with a midpoint switch that turns it into a brutal revenge horror. Based on a novel by Ryo Murakami, it stars Ryo Ishibashi as a widower whose son convinces him to hold auditions for a new girlfriend, pretending he's casting a movie. He meets Asami (Eihi Shiina) who is everything he dreamed off – for the first half at least.

The closing scenes are notorious for a spot of enforced acupuncture to the syllables "Kiri-Kiri-Kiri". It translates as "Deeper Deeper", though the German phonetic translation "KilleKille" – meaning "tickle tickle" – nails the painful pleasure of *Audition* perfectly. **PA**

DEAD MAN'S SHOES 2004

Murder in the Midlands.

43 Shane Meadows' Midlands revenge thriller does a fine job of making you root for an axe murderer... Richard (Paddy Considine) is Richard – a paratrooper who returns home to avenge his brother Anthony's abuse at the hands of a gang of drug dealers. Taking matters into his own hands, Richard dons a gas mask and sets about offing the offenders one-by-one.

There's a thick vein of black humour at the heart of Meadows' taut thriller – the banter between the gang is often genuinely funny and helps humanise this band of reprobates before they are picked off. At the same time, it never loses sight of the relationship between Richard and Anthony (Toby Kebbell), which is strained, but affectionate. Kebbell and Considine are both terrific throughout, the latter acting as both the film's hero and its monster. **WS**



THE LOST BOYS 1987

Hanging with the fang gang.

44 “Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow old. Never die. It’s fun to be a vampire.” So goes one of the greatest movie taglines, perfectly summing up the appeal of this famous ’80s horror-comedy. It was shot in just three weeks – which might explain the breakneck (or bite-neck, perhaps?) pace and a plot that doesn’t give its audience a chance to breathe, let alone get bored. It follows one-parent family Lucy (Dianne Wiest), Michael (Jason Patric) and Sam (Corey Haim) as they move to Santa Cruz, which would be a lovely place to live, if it wasn’t for all the damn vamps. As Michael’s tempted into joining a gang by new crush Star (Jami Gertz) and her boyfriend David (Kiefer Sutherland), his brother Sam fights to save his soul. *The Lost Boys* is funny, bloody, brilliantly performed – and with a soundtrack so good, it convinced Kiefer to sign on for the project. **SA**

DEEP RED 1975

Stylish shocks.

45 A turning point for director Dario Argento, *Deep Red* solidified his reputation as a stylistic genius, operating as the pinnacle of the visually intense exaggerated realism/shocking twists on which he’d made his name. *Deep Red* was so extreme, he could only follow it with the magical surrealism of his next film, *Suspiria*.

It’s almost impossible to discuss *Deep Red*’s plot without giving away its magnificent secrets, but we can say it features a jazz pianist named Marcus Daly (David Hemmings) investigating the violent murder of a psychic, conducted by a mysterious figure wearing black leather gloves, a murderer with a predilection for elaborate killings. The script keeps you constantly guessing the mystery behind the murders, before a third-act rug-pull makes you want to watch the whole thing again immediately. **SA**

FRANKENSTEIN 1931

Making a monster hit...

46 Having scored at the box office with Tod Browning’s *Dracula*, Universal cast around for another horror story and hit on Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel *Frankenstein, Or The Modern Prometheus*, offering it to their hot young British director James Whale. Whale, delighted by the chance to “dabble in the macabre”, created what’s widely reckoned to be – as John Baxter put it – “the most famous of all horror films, and deservedly so”. When Bela Lugosi turned down the role of the monster, a 44-year-old English-born bit-player with 75 films behind him seized his chance. Boris Karloff’s performance, at once chilling and pathetic – and much aided by Jack Pierce’s make-up – lends the film dignity and depth: most notably in the scene where the escaped monster encounters a child. For the first time we see him smile, but what follows is horrifying... **PK**



SHADOW MAN
Boris Karloff’s scene-stealing monster.

SCREAM QUEEN
Mia Farrow terrifies as
young housewife
Rosemary Woodhouse.



**YOUNG
FRANKENSTEIN 1974**
Poking fun at classic horror.

48 This send-up of vintage Universal horror films stars Gene Wilder as a doctor who discovers his grandfather was the infamous mad scientist Victor Frankenstein. It was co-written by Wilder and spoof king Mel Brooks and shot entirely in black and white to evoke the period that influenced it. Its tongue-in-cheek retelling of the Frankenstein story is hilariously self-aware, from Marty Feldman's scene-stealing turn as Igor, to Frankenstein and the monster's performance of 'Puttin' On the Ritz'. Brooks encouraged improvisation on the set – the gag where Igor's hump switches sides was ad-libbed – which adds to the film's anarchy. Wilder plays the lead role brilliantly, Peter Boyle is formidable as the monster and it's beautifully shot. Arguably the finest, and funniest, of Brooks' films. **AK**

THE CHANGELING 1979
The one with the pram...

49 *The Changeling* is constantly on horror fans' 'scariest movies' lists – watching it, it's very easy to see why. We won't spoil any of the specific shocks, but the plot sets the stage for a film that twists horror tropes (including seances, spooks, and crazy surprises) into a truly unforgettable experience.

George C Scott is John, a grieving composer who escapes to a secluded mansion to recover from a freak car accident that killed his wife and daughter. Unfortunately for him, the house is haunted... or is it? Based on a true story, with writer Russell Hunter inspired by his own experiences at the (now demolished) Henry Treat Rogers Mansion, *The Changeling*'s creepiness infects anyone who watches it, making you want to sleep with the lights on for nights after. If you're into James Wan movies such as *Insidious*, welcome to your new favourite fear flick. **SA**

ROSEMARY'S BABY 1968
Satanic panic.

47 Part of Roman Polanski's apartment trilogy, his adaptation of Ira Levin's novel was his first and best American-made movie. A frail Mia Farrow plays Rosemary Woodhouse, a young housewife whose husband makes a pact with the cultists living in their building at his wife's expense, in exchange for fame and money. Gender politics and pregnancy paranoia mixed with the horrors of urban living form the backbone of a Satanic nightmare that bagged an Oscar for Ruth Gordon. Wildly influential, adored by Kubrick, its "devil rape" dream sequence and Farrow's strange half smile in the closing moments still induce shudders. Levin approved, calling it the "most faithful adaptation of a novel ever." **PA**



WING MAN

Slime and gore aplenty for Jeff Goldblum's human/fly hybrid.

THE FLY 1986

Be afraid... The insect is awake.

50 Reimagining the 1958 movie in which a fly and a scientist swap heads, screenwriter Charles Edward Pogue posited a fusion on a DNA level, leading to a prolonged (and exceedingly icky) transmutation. Who better to direct than David Cronenberg, whose *Shivers*, *Rabid* and *The Brood* had established him as the doyen of disease?

"Let yourself go, don't hold back," urged producer Mel Brooks, though he couldn't have expected Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) to pop his penis in a jar after it fell off. Spectacularly gory, *The Fly* is also heartrendingly tender as journalist Veronica Quaife (Geena Davis) watches her man melt into a blob of pustulating flesh. "I see it as talking about mortality... and the tragedy of human loss," said Cronenberg. Incredibly, it was a smash hit, taking a cool \$60m. **JG**



BRIGHT LIGHTS
When cute, cuddly
critters go bad.

GREMLINS 1984 A monstrous comedy classic.

51 This self-aware horror/comedy was written by *Harry Potter* director Chris Columbus and produced by Steven Spielberg. A struggling inventor visits a mysterious store in Chinatown to buy a present for his son. He receives a cute, furry creature called a mogwai and is given three crucial pieces of information: don't expose it to bright light, don't let it get wet, and never feed it after midnight. Naturally, these rules are broken, spawning several more mogwai that transform into the grotesque, mischievous gremlins. The creatures were designed by FX veteran Chris Walas, who was responsible for the equally gruesome effects in Cronenberg's *The Fly*. Despite being a light-hearted comedy with a festive setting, it's a surprisingly dark film, which drew some criticism at the time. *Gremlins*, along with *Ghostbusters* and *Beetlejuice*, represents the best of the supernatural comedies of the '80s. **AK**



THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE 1974 A glimpse into the heart of darkness.

52 No, it's not a true story (though elements were 'inspired' by the crimes of notorious killer Ed Gein), but that doesn't stop *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* from being one of the most blisteringly frightening and relentless films ever made. The story is almost comically straightforward: a group of youngsters are alone in the country (though they're there to visit a grave, rather than the usual party). They get stranded after a series of weird events (including a seriously alarming, self-harming hitchhiker) and, while looking for gas, enter a farmhouse... What follows is a series of graphically violent encounters with a deranged family, including breakout star Leatherface. There's little sense or rationale to the carnage that ensues – and that only makes it all the more terrifying and real. **WS**

EYES WITHOUT A FACE 1960 Art horror that cuts deep.

53 Elegant, beautiful, terrifying: three words that sum up Georges Franju's French face-lift thriller. The brilliant surgeon Dr. Génessier and his daughter Christiane are involved in a car accident that leaves her face horribly scarred. Faking Christiane's death, Génessier keeps his daughter locked up at home, while at night he goes hunting the streets of Paris for a woman with the right face to steal and give to her...

While Britain's Hammer films were proving popular with French audiences at the time, Franju's film was entirely different from his UK contemporaries and, arguably, far scarier. He matches his obvious eye for a beautiful shot with a none-more-dark premise and some heartbreaking performances, notably from Edith Scob as Christiane. The final shot is simply stunning. **WS**

THE OLD DARK HOUSE 1932

A Whale of a time...

54 Having made his – and Boris Karloff's – reputation with *Frankenstein*, James Whale reunited with his star in a movie that gave full scope to his taste for extravagant humour. Adapted from a novel by JB Priestley, *ODH* finds a group of travellers (including Charles Laughton, Melvyn Douglas and Raymond Massey) seeking shelter from a storm in a remote Welsh mansion. Their eccentric hosts are Ernest Thesiger and Eva Moore (Thesiger's enunciation of "Have a po-ta-to" is a delight), and Karloff enjoys himself as the lecherous butler. Whale plays teasingly with our reactions: building up tension, deflating it with a mocking anticlimax, then springing a new shock when we're least expecting it. John Baxter summed up the film as "a confidence trick worked with cynical humour by a master technician". **PK**

ONIBABA 1964

Mask of the white death...

55 The strife-torn 16th century in Japan, wracked by incessant conflict as rival warlords struggled for supremacy, has furnished the setting for many of that country's movies: *Seven Samurai* and *Ugetsu Monogatari*, to look no further. Kaneto Shind's atmosphere-rich grand guignol drama depicts the bottom-feeders of those endless battles: a woman and her daughter-in-law, living in a marshland of tall grasses, who seek out wounded samurai in order to kill them and sell their armour. But when the younger woman decides to take a lover, the jealous older woman devises a macabre plan to scare her off. (Her plan's key element, a malignant devil mask, would inspire William Friedkin and *The Exorcist*.) Unflinching in its violence and eroticism, *Onibaba* feels as if it might veer into the supernatural, but it's more powerful for not doing so. **PK**

THE INNOCENTS 1961

Jack Clayton turns the screw.

56 Henry James' *The Turn Of The Screw* is one of the great literary ghost stories, and Jack Clayton's stylish adaptation more than does it justice. Captured in dreamy black-and-white, it's the tale of governess Miss Giddens (Deborah Kerr) taking on the care of two children following the death of their sinister previous carer, Miss Jessel, and her equally corpsified consort, Peter Quint.

As strange things begin to happen around the house, Giddens becomes convinced that the spirits of the two dead lovers are trying to claim the souls of the children – but who is the real danger in the house?

Clayton's film is a masterclass in ambiguity. Beautifully shot and, crucially, still nerve-freezingly terrifying, *The Innocents* is a timeless classic with one hell of an ending. **WS**



STREET FIGHTERS
Nick Frost and Simon Pegg
prepare to battle the
zombie hordes.

SHAUN OF THE DEAD 2004

Blood, brains and ice cream.

57 Simon Pegg, Jessica Hynes and Edgar Wright's sitcom *Spaced* had made a big impact at the turn of the century, and provided a launchpad for Wright's

second feature film (his first, *A Fistful Of Fingers* has barely been seen at all). Spinning out of a zombie dream sequence in that series, Pegg and Wright set about creating a movie that would play out like one of the zombie films they loved, albeit transposed to suburban London. There's little in the way of weaponry here – just cricket bats and tossed

Sade records – and Shaun (Pegg) and Ed (Nick Frost, potty-mouthed, scabrously hilarious) are far from the ideal zombie hunters. But the film's combination of real scares, heartfelt emotion (Shaun's far-too-late reconciliation with his hated step-dad) and genuine laughs makes for a truly winning combination. Pegg and Wright's careers blossomed. **WS**

HAUNTED HOUSE

Supernatural scares or a psychological breakdown? You decide.



THE HAUNTING 1963

House of mysteries.

58 There's so much about *The Haunting* that shouldn't work. It's a movie draped in cliché, from the forbidding Gothic mansion to the stereotypical guests invited there by paranormal investigator John Markway (Richard Johnson), and yet it's truly brilliant.

What's remarkable is how little actually happens. The film is almost entirely made of implied threat. Director Robert Wise, whose career took in titles as diverse as *The Sound Of Music* and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, makes the house itself a character. Without resorting to effects, he suggests a malignant sentience in Hill House. That Wise served his apprenticeship under the master of suggestion, Val Lewton, should come as no surprise. **S'OB**



RE-ANIMATOR 1985

Bloody hilarious.

59 It's easy to forget in this current *Ash Vs Evil Dead* reality, but the original *Evil Dead* was a straight and scary horror film. The comedy elements only took centre stage in the incredible sequel. Between those movies came another (relatively unsung) comedy horror classic, Stuart Gordon's masterpiece, *Re-Animator*; a clear touchstone for Sam Raimi's tonal shift.

A hilarious mix of gore, gags and sick slapstick, *Re-Animator* remixes HP Lovecraft's *Herbert West – Reanimator* novella, tracking the titular West (Jeffrey Combs), a mad medical student hellbent on bringing the dead back to life. It's gore-soaked – effects artist John Naulin used a maximum of two gallons of blood on previous movie shoots. On *Re-Animator* he used 24 gallons. Hugely influential, and endlessly entertaining, *Re-Animator* is essential – as long as you've got a strong stomach. **SA**

SUSPIRIA 1977

Terror in Technicolor.

60 It's a cliché to describe a horror movie as nightmarish, but if any film ever deserved that descriptor, it's *Suspria*. Despite the apparently simple plot – a foreign student arrives at a dance school only to find that the pupils are being killed off by something sinister – it's got an unearthly, dreamlike quality that makes it genuinely unnerving. Visually, it's beautiful, even at its goriest. The production design is lavish, and there was clearly plenty of room in the budget for fake blood; rather than hide anything in the shadows, director Dario Argento bathes every scene in neon light. Aurally, too, it's pretty special, with a discordant electronic score by Goblin. It's got so much style and swagger that minor script foibles (such as Udo Kier's psychologist awkwardly reeling off a history of witchcraft) can be easily forgiven. **SD**

HORROR STORY
Essie Davis battles to
save her son from the
storybook monster.

THE BABADOOK 2014

Storybook scares.

61 Jennifer Kent's astonishing feature debut is part possession tale, part bleak motherhood drama and part Tim Burton fantasy gone terribly wrong. It's the story of Amelia (Essie Davis), a bereaved widow struggling to bring up her son Samuel (an old-before-his-time Noah Wiseman). Things are tough enough without the arrival of Mister Babadook – the sinister storybook character that Samuel becomes obsessed with, and eventually terrified by. Initially chalking it up to an over-active imagination, Amelia throws the book in the garbage, only for it to reappear again and again.

Davis plays the role of Amelia with total conviction – by turns terrified and terrifying. As the film progresses you start to wonder if she is more of a threat to Samuel than the monster, but when we finally do meet the beast it's genuinely alarming. None other than William Friedkin, director of *The Exorcist*, has cited it, saying "I've never seen a more frightening film." Now that's high praise indeed. **WS**



FIRST CUT
Solve the puzzles to
survive this serial
killer's deadly game.

SAW 2004

The low budget thriller that conquered the world.

62 Across nine features, the *Saw* franchise rapidly ran itself into the ground. And yet, there's no doubting the effectiveness of the original. Adam (Leigh Whannell) awakes to find himself chained to a pipe with Cary Elwes' Dr Lawrence Gordon similarly shackled opposite him and a corpse on the floor between them. The two soon realise that they have fallen prey to the 'Jigsaw Killer' and must figure out one of his fiendish puzzles if they want to survive. Of course, things aren't quite that straightforward, and the final reveal spins the entire film on its head rather neatly. Made for just \$1.3m, *Saw* took an impressive \$103m at the box office and made the young James Wan's career (he's since gone on to cement his horror credentials with the likes of *Insidious* and *The Conjuring*). It remains a genuinely tight thriller. **WS**



PEEPING TOM 1960

A masterpiece that finished a career.

63 It's hard to shock people these days, but 1960s audiences – or more specifically 1960s film critics – were so vexed by *Peeping Tom* that they set out to destroy director Michael Powell's career. Not because the film is bad – it's now rightly considered an ahead-of-its-time masterpiece – but because it makes us, the viewers, voyeurs as lonely filmmaker Mark begins his murder spree in London. Most killer thrillers let us sit back and enjoy the carnage, free from any connection to the killer. *Peeping Tom* forces you to see things through Mark's eyes and even feel sympathy for him, as a victim of childhood abuse. Alas, it would take a positive reappraisal by Martin Scorsese before the film received the praise it richly deserved, and by that time Powell's career was all but over. **WS**

FREAKS 1932

Who'd want to be normal?

64 "Give me something that will out-horror *Frankenstein*," MGM studio boss Irving Thalberg demanded of director Tod Browning, whose *Dracula* had just been trumped by Universal's rival offering. He got much more than he bargained for...

Set in a travelling circus, the film is cast using genuine 'freaks' – a limbless man, Siamese twins, a hermaphrodite and more – whom Browning treats with empathy and affection. The baddies are the 'normals' – the beautiful trapeze artist who seduces a dwarf when he comes into money, planning to poison him, and the strongman who's her secret lover – and when the freaks discover the scheme they wreak a horrendous revenge on the pair. MGM dumped the film and Browning's career never recovered. But with its vividly-depicted milieu – Browning had started out working in a circus after running away from home at 16 – and macabre humour, it looks like his masterpiece. **PK**

SIGHTSEERS 2012

Tourist trap.

65 Ben Wheatley's pitch-black comedy is wonderfully grounded in the everyday. Murderous lovers Chris (Steve Oram) and Tina (Alice Lowe) may cut a bloody swathe across England in Chris's caravan, but it's the gags about the Pencil Museum in Keswick and Chris being "a sensitive lover" that linger. As this schlubby Bonnie and Clyde take in the local tourist attractions, they also take out an array of irritating interlopers. Based on a stand-up routine originally written and performed by its stars, it's properly funny, at first, but as the film progresses, a queasy tone emerges. Broadly sympathetic to its stars (largely because of Tina's overbearing mother), as Wheatley dials up the horror it becomes clear that these two are headed for destruction. If you enjoy the sickly tone of *The League Of Gentlemen*, Wheatley's killer comedy is an essential Northern gothic treat. **WS**

A GIRL WALKS HOME ALONE AT NIGHT 2014

Sex, drugs and '80s pop.

66 Cool, sexy and with a soundtrack to die for, this self-styled "Iranian vampire Western" (which was actually shot in California) is one of the most original horror films in years. Filmed in glorious black and white it's the story of Arash (Arash Marandi), a young man in the aptly named Bad City and his encounters with a mysterious girl (Sheila Vand) who floats through the film offering anyone who wrongs her. Shifting between pulp adventure, oblique mystery thriller and outright horror story, Ana Lily Amirpour's directorial debut is seductive, strange and utterly unmissable.

Its a self-consciously cool film, its heroine decked out in trainers, stripey shirt and with a record collection to die for, but that never comes across as smugness. **WS**

KILL, BABY, KILL! 1966

Gone girl.

67 A series of murders in an 18th century Carpathian village is just the start of this chilling Gothic tale involving a witch, an aged Baroness (Giana Vivaldi) with supernatural powers, and a little ghost girl in a white lace dress. Italian director Mario Bava is responsible for such horror classics as *Black Sunday*, *Black Sabbath* and *Blood And Black Lace*, but this is his masterpiece, blending vivid colours, peculiar camera placements and crumbling sets to create a delirious nightmare movie at once elegant and bonkers. The image of a ghostly bouncing/rolling ball has been lifted by Fellini (*Toby Dammit*), Kubrick (*The Shining*) and Del Toro (*Crimson Peak*), while directors as great and varied as Scorsese, Burton and Lynch have cited Bava as a major influence. If you're unfamiliar with the maestro's body of work, start here. **JG**

FANG-TASTIC
The movie that made us all afraid to go in the water.



JAWS 1975

Dawn of the blockbuster.

68 The film that either revolutionised or ruined cinema forever, depending on your perspective. Backed by an unprecedented-in-scale TV promotional campaign, *Jaws* was a great white smash that led to

inevitably diminishing returns over three needless sequels. The original, however, is peerless. A shark is hoovering up victims in beautiful Amity Bay (something Steven Spielberg renders with minimal, but highly effective, gore) and it's down to Brody (Roy Schieder), surly shark hunter Quint and oceanographer Hooper (Richard Dreyfuss) to save as

many lives as possible while the venal local councillors insist on keeping the beach open. While the first half of the film establishes the threat on land, the second half transitions to the glorious blue of the ocean. The trio find themselves woefully ill-prepared for the monstrous beast, which remains menacing even *after* you've seen its big rubbery chops. **WS**



FRIGHT NIGHT
There's murder on the dancefloor as Carrie wreaks her revenge.

CARRIE 1976 There will be blood...

69 Tarantino's eighth favourite movie was the first Stephen King adaptation. It's one hell of a start, with Brian De Palma's tornado technique swirling around a heartbreaking turn from Sissy Spacek. She plays Carrie White, a painfully shy teen who's targeted by bullies at school (Nancy Allen, John Travolta) and returns home each night to a religious-zealot mom (Piper Laurie). But she can move things with her mind, a gift/curse that comes to a devastating head when all of Carrie's pain and rage is unleashed at the school prom... Spacek and Laurie were nominated for Oscars (unusual for a horror movie) and the former should have won – she certainly suffered for her art, insisting that it was she who was buried alive ready for the iconic hand-from-grave climax. **JG**



WOLF CREEK 2005 To hell and backpacks.

70 This Australian serial killer thriller was dismissed by some, at the time, for the brutal treatment of its female characters. And yet, *Wolf Creek* isn't just another trashy exploitation flick.

It's set in the Outback – a still relatively under-explored setting in horror cinema – and director Greg McLean conjures terrific performances from his cast of backpackers, stranded when their car breaks down. Rescue comes in the form of affable redneck Mick Taylor (John Jarratt) – until he drugs the trio and takes them back to his place for a spot of torture. It's a memorable turn that marks Taylor out as sort of evil Crocodile Dundee.

A solid sequel followed, with a third film currently in production. In the meantime, Mick Taylor continues his reign of terror on the small screen in a *Wolf Creek* TV show. **WS**

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT 1999 If they'd only taken a phone...

71 Take three unknown actors, give them a couple of cameras, and dump them in the middle of the woods without a script... It should've been a disaster, but *The Blair Witch Project* scared up a box office storm.

Best known now for the scene in which amateur filmmaker Heather Donahue snots out a desperate apology to the families of her crew members, it's a brilliant exercise in the power of suggestion. There's never anything in the woods except directors Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez making spooky noises at 3am, but the actors are all so worn down through lack of sleep that their fear is contagious. A clever marketing strategy (including a straight-faced website detailing the facts of the filmmakers' disappearance) meant that some audiences thought the events of the film were real. **SD**



POLTERGEIST 1982

"They're here..."

72 The rumours of who really called the shots on *Poltergeist* will no doubt rage on. Is it a Tobe Hooper (the credited director) film, or did producer Steven Spielberg really take charge of the clapperboard? Whatever the truth is, it remains one of the grisliest and scariest movies to ever be rated PG in the US.

Its brilliance is that it all feels so rooted in normality. The Freelings are an everyday American family and to have the evil spirits enter our realm through something as mundane and ubiquitous as the television set – something everyone (apart from real weirdos) have in their house – was a masterstroke. This is a family chiller that still has the power to freak out the grown-ups. **S'OB**

TV NIGHTMARES

Heather O'Rourke discovers too much telly is a very bad thing.

NAILING IT

A novel take on facial piercings and an insatiable thirst for blood...



HELLRAISER 1987

Of inhuman bondage.

73 Oh Frank, what have you done? There you go, toying with the world's most dangerous Rubik's Cube 'cos you were a bit bored and horny, and now you've literally unleashed hell. Nice going!

Author Clive Barker's S&M demon fest is a decidedly odd and original vision. A bloody tribute to self-mutilation and sexy times, its legacy might be an iconic needle-bonce and a seemingly unstoppable run of straight-to-DVD sequels, but the first entry has an enthrallingly nightmarish quality that few other horror films can match. Concerning bored housewife Claire seducing men literally for their meat (to put on the bones of her beloved ex-lover Frank), it's a fleshy, darkly comical watch that mixes the miraculous with the mundane and doesn't skimp on the gore. Open the box and witness the birth of a horror icon with a great silhouette. **MH**



BRAINDEAD 1992

You'll laugh yourself sick.

74 Before Peter Jackson found the One Ring and started hanging out with Hobbits, he was covered in fake blood somewhere in New Zealand, directing some of the most subversive and sickest horror flicks cinema has ever produced. *Bad Taste* and *Meet The Feebles* are worth seeking out, but if you only catch one early Jackson film, make it his splat-classic *Braindead*. The plot follows Lionel, attempting a relationship with his true love Paquita, away from the prying eyes of his possessive mother (who he still lives with). But when his mother is bitten by a rabid rat-monkey, Lionel has to deal with the undead consequences.

Despite its reputation as the bloodiest of all time – 300 litres of fake blood were used in the final scene of the film alone – *Braindead* is hilarious, sweet and unmissable. **SA**

THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE 2001

Uncivil war.

75 Guillermo del Toro has a knack for finding human evils in the midst of supernatural horror, and nowhere is that more evident than in this creepy Spanish ghost story. Because while moving into a 1930s orphanage plagued by “the one who sighs” might seem pretty terrifying, new boy Carlos (Fernando Tielve) soon discovers that the realities of fascism are far scarier.

Aesthetically, *The Devil's Backbone* owes a debt to J-horror; its main ghoul has a similar look to the spectres who routinely seem to crawl out of wells and TVs in Japan. But while most of those films focus on revenge, there are more complex powers at play here.

Ultimately, this is a sad story that's as much about the cost of war as it is about ghosts, told through the eyes of a child. **SD**

HOUR OF THE WOLF 1967

Dark night of the soul...

76 The 'hour of the wolf', Ingmar Bergman explained, is the hour midway between midnight and dawn "when most people die, when sleep is deepest, when nightmares are more real... when the sleepless are haunted by their deepest fear". This is the hour when his protagonist, an artist named Johan (Max von Sydow) living on an island with his pregnant wife (Liv Ullmann), is tormented by terrible dreams – or perhaps memories – of murder, mutilation, even necrophilia.

Elsewhere on the island is a castle inhabited by a baron and his friends, who seem to be preparing a cruel joke on Johan. How much of this is real, how much in Johan's imaginings, Bergman leaves us to guess. And all this we see in flashback, after Johan has disappeared. In an output not short on pessimism, this fantasy is the director's darkest film. **PK**

HIS HOUSE 2020

Migrant crisis.

77 There's a case to be made that the haunted-house genre peaked with Shirley Jackson's acclaimed novel *The Haunting Of Hill House* in 1959. So the fact that *His House* locates new ideas in this most well-worn of sub-genres is impressive. That it's also writer/director Remi Weekes' debut feature? Well, that's just silly. Sopé Dirisù and Wunmi Mosaku star as a couple who flee war-torn South Sudan and find refuge in the UK, but the treacherous journey costs their daughter her life. The pair are determined to make a home out of the decrepit house they're moved into, but it soon becomes clear that something has followed them across the sea... Neatly connecting an otherworldly threat to grief and survivor's guilt, *His House* effectively utilises its contained setting to ratchet up the scares, but it's a film that goes much deeper than surface frights. **JF**

VIDEODROME 1983

Long live the new flesh.

78 Described by Andy Warhol as "A *Clockwork Orange* for the '80s" and by critic Roger Ebert as "one of the least entertaining films of all time", *Videodrome* is an archetypal David Cronenberg film, a freaky fusion of philosophy and politics, technology and flesh.

James Woods excels as a cable TV programmer who obsesses over the hardcore S&M images he's intermittently accessing, and pursues the titular program only to be persistently blocked. Naturally he winds up with a vaginal slot in his stomach into which he inserts videotapes...

Also featuring a haunting turn by Debbie Harry (her first major role) as Max's pain-seeking girlfriend with cigarette burns on her breasts, this nightmarish work brands the back of your eyeballs with images that won't scrub off. **JG**

GOING APE

Pioneering special effects helped to make *King Kong* a monster smash.



KING KONG 1933

Monkey business...

79 OK, the dialogue creaks more than a little and the acting, Fay Wray's full-throated screams apart, is on the stiff side. Not surprisingly, perhaps: neither of the credited helmers, Merian Cooper

and Ernest Schoedsack, had much of a reputation as an actors' director, and RKO was initially sceptical of the whole idea. To their amazement, the studio found themselves with a massive smash-hit on their hands. Not just a hit, either – but one of the enduring iconic myths of cinema. Willis O'Brien, pioneering genius of stop-motion animation, created in

Kong a tragically susceptible giant ape, for all his strength as touchingly vulnerable as his contemporary, Boris Karloff's Frankenstein monster. Not bad for an 18" model made of metal armature and covered in bunny fur. The film's haunting *Beauty And The Beast* atmosphere is enhanced by Max Steiner's music, the first major original score of the sound era. **PK**

SPACE ODDITY
The alien critter
rears its ugly head.



NOSFERATU 1922

Out for the Count...

81 Through *Nosferatu*, wrote the critic Béla Bálasz, there blows “a chill draught from the world beyond”. Countless versions of the Dracula story have been made since, often with far greater technical sophistication, but Murnau’s film still remains one of the most disturbing. Max Schreck’s vampire is unforgettably grotesque – no hint of the urbanity of Bela Lugosi or Christopher Lee. Cadaverously thin, bald, bat-eared, rabbit-toothed, he moves with short convulsive steps, taloned hands close to his sides. The effect is near-ludicrous, chilling and even pitiful – the creature’s need for blood, for living warmth, seems urgent to the point of agony. He’s named ‘Count Orlok’ – presumably to disguise the fact that the film lifted the plot of Bram Stoker’s novel. If so, the trick failed; Stoker’s estate sued for breach of copyright. **PK**

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK 1975

Hold the cucumber sandwiches...

82 Valentine’s Day 1900 – and a party of girls from a strict boarding school in the Aussie state of Victoria are taken out for a picnic near a craggy geological outcropping. Then three of the girls and one of their teachers vanish. Peter Weir’s movie dispenses with every cliché of the horror genre: no darkness, no spooky monsters, not even any blood, just beautiful weather, an idyllic setting, pretty girls in virginal long white dresses – and a lush lyricism that hints at deeper erotic currents. But no explanations. One of the girls shows up again, barefoot, with no memory of what happened; as for the others, who knows? Working from a novel by Joan Lindsay, Weir and his screenwriter Cliff Green have the good sense to provide no neat ending. They just leave us with a tantalising, haunting mystery. **PK**

ALIEN 1979

Timeless, terrifying sci-fi horror.

80 While a lot of science fiction is optimistic, dreaming of a brighter future, Ridley Scott’s *Alien* is set in a universe where space travel is utterly matter-of-fact. The crew of the *Nostromo*, a deep space mining ship, aren’t in awe of the fact they’re journeying through the stars: they just want to get home. Space is a business, not the final frontier, and this understated, realistic approach is reflected in every part of the film – including the ship itself. The industrial corridors make for a wonderfully claustrophobic horror experience as HR Giger’s terrifying creature picks the crew off one by one. Sigourney Weaver is fantastic as the courageous and resourceful Ellen Ripley, who tries desperately to stop its rampage. Almost 40 years later *Alien* still looks incredible. The scene where the crew discovers the famous derelict ship on planet LV-426 is still one of the most powerfully atmospheric scenes in science fiction. **AK**

BLADE RUNNER
"The night HE
came home."

HALLOWEEN 1978

Scares in the suburbs.

83 You only have to take a cursory glance at Rob Zombie's fatally misconceived 2007 remake to understand what's so precious about John Carpenter's peerless original. He wasn't interested in psychoanalysing his Michael Myers. For Carpenter, the Shape (as Myers is referred to in the film's credits) is an unstoppable force of nature. There's a lot of Hitchcock in *Halloween's* slithering camerawork and a lot of B-movie producer Roger Corman in its unfussy, fat-free storytelling. It made a star out of Jamie Lee Curtis, who debuted as Laurie Strode, the unlucky teenager stalked by the Shatner-masked menace.

While *Halloween* may shy from the luridness of its exploitation drive-in stablemates, it shares their zip and focus, while menace and threat drip from every frame. It's a film where shifting volumes of darkness and light are used to suggest something sinister, and coupled with its minimal electro score (composed by Carpenter himself), it's a fine example of the "less is more" school of shocks. **S'OB**



"HERE'S JOHNNY!"
Jack Nicholson terrifies
as a writer possessed
by evil forces.

THE SHINING 1980

All work and no play makes Jack an iconic antagonist.

84 Frequently voted the scariest movie of all time, notoriously disliked by Stephen King, whose novel it's based on, Stanley Kubrick's supernatural hotel horror has fans still so obsessed that an entire documentary, *Room 237*, was made, exploring its dense subtexts and the rich mythology that has sprung up around it. The story of a psychic boy, his fragile mother and his writer father slowly driven psychotic by the ghosts of The Overlook hotel saw everything about the shoot – from the endless takes and bullying that drove Shelley Duvall to distraction, to Jack Nicholson's improvised "Here's Johnny!" – become the stuff of legend. Fortunately the film is too, packed with unforgettable imagery – the twins in the corridor, an elevator filled with blood, that trike ride through the hotel, the woman in Room 237... It lingers like we never left. **PA**



THE OTHERS 2001

Things that go bump in the light.

85 Modern horror often gets away with piling up the body parts and bombarding audiences with crescendos of strings for scares. It's not right but it's cheap and it gets the job done. Ghost stories, on the other hand, demand subtlety, finesse and a maintained sense of dread as if something is blowing softly on the hair on the back of your neck. And that's exactly what you get here in Alejandro Amenábar's first English language movie when Nicole Kidman's young mother, Grace, arrives in an enormous old house with her two light-sensitive children.

It's when three new servants arrive that Grace's security and sanity starts to unravel. Doors creak, footsteps echo and the constant juggling of darkness to protect her children becomes a terrifying task. With a fraught performance from Kidman, this is a ghost story that will stay with you. **LB**

NIGHT OF THE DEMON 1957

Train spotting.

86 Director Jacques Tourneur had made his name in the 1940s with a run of films that focused more on psychological horror than on gruesome monsters, including *Cat People*, *I Walked With A Zombie* and *The Leopard Man*. And for most of *Night Of The Demon*'s running time, that's what you get: a brilliant, finely-drawn A-movie horror about a Satanic cult dressed in B-movie clothing.

That is, until the movie's climax, which, after the long, suggestive build-up, plonks a "real" demon on screen. The result of a creative clash between Tourneur and the film's producer Hal E Chester, which the director lost, the shot is the sole stumble in a masterful movie whose reputation has only grown in the decades since. **S'OB**

THE WICKER MAN 1973

It's time to make your appointment...

87 A puritanical copper travels to a remote Scottish island to investigate the disappearance of a young girl and gets a lot more than he bargained for...

We take *The Wicker Man* for granted, these days. It's cosy and funny more than it is frightening. The residents of Summerisle, with their sex and songs, are clearly having a much better time of it than Edward Woodward's scowling Sergeant Howie. But that's why it works. It's about the power of religion and how it turns people into monsters. You see that in the islanders and their final crime (which we'll keep vague), but it's also clear in Howie, the film's nominal protagonist. He's a man who, because of his religion, has become an ultra-repressed puritan who can't see the horrible truth until it's far too late. **WS**



CREEPY CUSTOMS

It's all free sex and bizarre pagan rituals on the island of Summerisle.

CANDYMAN 1992

Be his victim...

88 Based on *Hellraiser* director/author Clive Barker's short story 'The Forbidden' *Candyman* follows Helen Lyle (Virginia Madsen), a post-grad student studying urban legends who becomes fascinated with the story of a local hook-handed murderer, known as Candyman (Tony Todd), who is said to appear if you say his name five times in front of a mirror. After Helen decides to test the theory, her life changes forever.

Candyman might not have had the pop-cultural impact of Freddy, Jason or Michael Myers, but to horror fans, he's just as iconic, with Bernard Rose's smartly shot flick a firm fan favourite. Artful cinematography, strong performances, clever scripting and a masterful Philip Glass score combine to create a movie that, appropriately, lives on as a word-of-mouth legend. **SA**



SCREAM 1996

Carve-up sent up...

89 Wes Craven's classic isn't just a horror movie – it's a horror movie about horror movies. Or as Roger Ebert put it, "*Scream* is self-deconstructing; it's like one of those cans that heats its own soup." The characters have seen all the horror classics, they know the clichés, they discuss Hannibal Lecter's motivation and remind each other that you should never say "I'll be right back". So the film sends itself up – but at the same time it's genuinely scary, with the killer roaming around in a white mask based on Munch's famous painting and offing people if they can't answer questions about – guess what – horror movies. Several inferior sequels followed, and the franchise was also adapted as a TV series in 2015. **PK**

THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN 1957

Hammering out an identity.

90 Hammer had already opened its horror doors a year previously, with chillers *Quatermass* and *X The Unknown*. But it was the lush melodrama and rich tones of Eastmancolor on display here that established the production company's foray into bodice-ripping period horror for which it would become known.

Cushing's Swiss Baron is a driven scientist, all eyes on the prize and zero empathy. Christopher Lee plays the lanky, lolloping creature as a volatile halfwit. For artistic and legal reasons, scriptwriter Jimmy Sangster and director Terrance Fisher steered clear of Universal's take on the Shelley legend. Gone were the neck bolts, and in were frock coats, wanton sleaze, and the lurid red spatter of censor-baiting claret. Hammer's identity can be traced right back here. **MH**

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD 1968

They're coming to get you...

91 The granddaddy of modern zombie movies is now over 50 years old. That means there's more time between its release and now than there is between it and the original *Nosferatu*. That it remains so gut-wrenchingly terrifying is a testament to how revolutionary George A Romero's garage horror flick was. Though its direct sequel, the more struttingly satirical *Day Of The Dead*, gets more plaudits, *Night Of The Living Dead* remains the scarier and the rawer of the two. The murky black-and-white photography and sizzingly contemporary civil rights subtext give it a forceful power, and the ending, as bleak and depressing as it is, remains one of the great movie closers, a perfect capping of the film's themes. Avoid with your life the 30th anniversary redux, with newly added scenes. **S'OB**



DEAD MEN WALKING
Shambling corpses on the hunt for fresh human flesh to devour.

LET THE RIGHT ONE IN 2008

Love in a cold climate.

92 What's the sound of snow falling in the darkness? Tiny bubbles in mineral water, sugar grains scattering on marble, according to director Tomas Alfredson in the commentary to his delicate vampire love story about a bullied little boy and the strange companion, Eli, who he meets in the snow one night. It's set in the suburbs of Stockholm in the 1980s, and location is vital to Alfredson's adaptation of John Ajvide Lindqvist's novel of the same name (*Låt den rätte komma*, in Swedish); the grey apartment blocks, the lonely climbing frame where the two meet and of course the shocking contrast of blood on snow. Alfredson made significant changes from the novel – bringing ambiguity over Eli's gender – but it only increases the layers of a horror that is as cerebral and emotional as it is visceral. **PA**

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS 1978

Power to the Pod people.

93 A fine reminder that not all remakes are redundant. The 1956 *Body Snatchers* was a fabulous slice of Communist-era paranoia with a noir sensibility and a chilling finale. Some 22 years later, Philip Kaufmann's version retells the tale with a more explicitly horror bent. Alien seeds land on Earth and begin duplicating and replacing people. Matthew Bennell (Donald Sutherland) and a group of friends learn the truth and try to alert the authorities, but it soon becomes clear that they are far, far too late.

Kaufmann's taut direction and the fine cast (including Brooke Adams, Leonard Nimoy, Jeff Goldblum and Veronica Cartwright) bring weight and credibility to what could have been a pulpy retread. Instead, it's an utterly terrifying exploration of the loss of identity. **WS**

RINGU 1998

Well, well, well...

94 At a time when US horror was caught in a laborious cycle of post-*Scream* post-modernism, director Hideo Nakata made a stripped-down ghost story that needed only distorted images, avant-garde sound design and a head of lank hair to burrow under viewers' skin. The plot is urban myth given a tech edge: a cursed videotape is doing the rounds; watch it and you'll die seven days later. Hokey, sure, but try telling yourself that when ghost-girl Sadako (Rie Ino'o) crawls out of her well and then the TV to inch across the living room in spasmodic jerks with limbs bent in unnatural angles (Ino'o actually walked backwards with exaggerated movements for these scenes, and the film was then run in reverse). An instant-classic that retains its uncanny power, *Ringu* kick-started a wave of J-horror and inevitable US remakes. **JG**





DRACULA 1958 The Count's first bow.

95 Or, to give it its stateside title, *Horror Of Dracula* (changed to avoid confusion with Tod Browning's 1931 adaptation). However, taking even a cursory glance at the two movies, you can see that there's a world of difference between Universal and Hammer's respective Counts.

Bela Lugosi is 'the other' – a creepy animalistic predator wrapped in human skin. Christopher Lee meanwhile, is a seductive bassoon-voiced gent who radiates menacing charm. The Count's bringing sexy back, baby. With Peter Cushing as vamp-hunter Van Helsing, the studio found a great pair of cinematic sparring partners.

With James Bernard's immensely grand and hyperactive score and a truly terrific final confrontation, *Dracula* is Hammer: extravagant period horror with grisly detail and a gloriously vibrant colour palette. **MH**

THE SIXTH SENSE 1999 "I see dead people."

96 Before M Night Shyamalan was known for increasingly implausible twists, getting stropky with critics and making films about killer trees, he was 'the new Spielberg' – a director who mixed the fantastic with the everyday. You can see why he earned that moniker with his third film (the first that people actually took any notice of). A chilling ghost story with a warm heart, it's the tale of Cole Sear (Haley Joel Osment), a troubled kid who sees dead people walking. Enter child psychologist Malcolm Crowe (Bruce Willis) who initially struggles to help Sear overcome his delusions, before realising that there's more going on here than he realises. Everyone focuses on the film's famous final sting, but it's a grace note, really. The strength of *The Sixth Sense* is that it's a character study of two troubled souls helping each other move on. **WS**

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 1984

Meet the man of your dreams.

97 Looked at rationally, Freddy Krueger is more ridiculous than scary: he's just a man with a melted face. But Krueger isn't rational. He's a figure from a fevered nightmare who strikes when his victims are asleep, using their fears against them. Wes Craven's teen slasher is a surreal slice of psychological terror that builds a complex mythology out of primal fears. It attacks from every angle, folding childish terrors into adolescent anxieties about growing up, having sex, and discovering that parents can't always be trusted. Heather Langenkamp's Nancy is one of the genre's fiercest final girls, but the film's biggest triumph is turning what should be the safest place in the world – in bed, under the covers – into a demon's playground. **SD**



SCAR FACE
Robert Englund's bladed glove disturbed many an '80s teen's dreams.



MUMMY'S BOY
Anthony Perkins as
deranged motel owner
Norman Bates.

PSYCHO 1960

Mother isn't quite herself.

98 Hitchcock had made plenty of films that had audiences on the edge of their seats – but never one that had people hiding under them, screaming. Noting the success Roger Corman was having in the States, and Hammer in the UK, Hitch decided to show these upstarts what a real master could do with the genre and, when Paramount balked at the idea, financed it himself, shooting fast in B&W with his pared-down television team. That wasn't the only rule he broke: who else would dare kill off his star (Janet Leigh) 40 minutes in? And then decree that no one was allowed in once the movie had started? Just "a fun picture", as Hitch termed it, *Psycho* alienated many critics, but the public flocked to see it, and it set a template for horror movies for decades to come. **PK**



THE HILLS HAVE EYES 1977

"The lucky ones died first..."

99 Wes Craven's follow up to his nihilistic shocker *The Last House On The Left* bears many of the hallmarks of its predecessor. It's sadistic, uncompromising, and culminates with everyday folk (the innocent Carter family) pushed beyond breaking point to commit acts of fatal revenge if they want to survive.

But unlike the former film's joyless trudge through unremitting torture, *The Hills Have Eyes* desert-set thrills bounce along with a fizzy verve. Despite the devastating brutality on display, there's still a playful heart to the pantomime villainy here.

Unwittingly starting a post-modern intertextual film war with *Evil Dead* director Sam Raimi (for the torn *Jaws* poster in the family's caravan), Craven's cheeky wit shines on through all the terror.

As the film's forerunner once stated, "It's only a movie". **MH**

HEREDITARY 2018

Paimon dieu!

100 Ari Aster's directorial debut arrived on a wave of so-called 'elevated horror' movies, but proved that terrific filmmaking transcends genres. Centring on a Utah family that violently fractures following a horrifying accidental death, *Hereditary* weaponises grief and guilt as the surviving family members reckon with their loss. The complex mythology creeps up on you, building towards an inevitable but no less shocking conclusion. What sets *Hereditary* apart are the astounding performances (an Academy without genre biases would have awarded Toni Colette the Best Actress gong) and Aster's fully realised visual toolkit, the filmmaker using striking cuts from day to night and suffocating miniature shots to establish an inescapable sense of dread. **JF**

SFX

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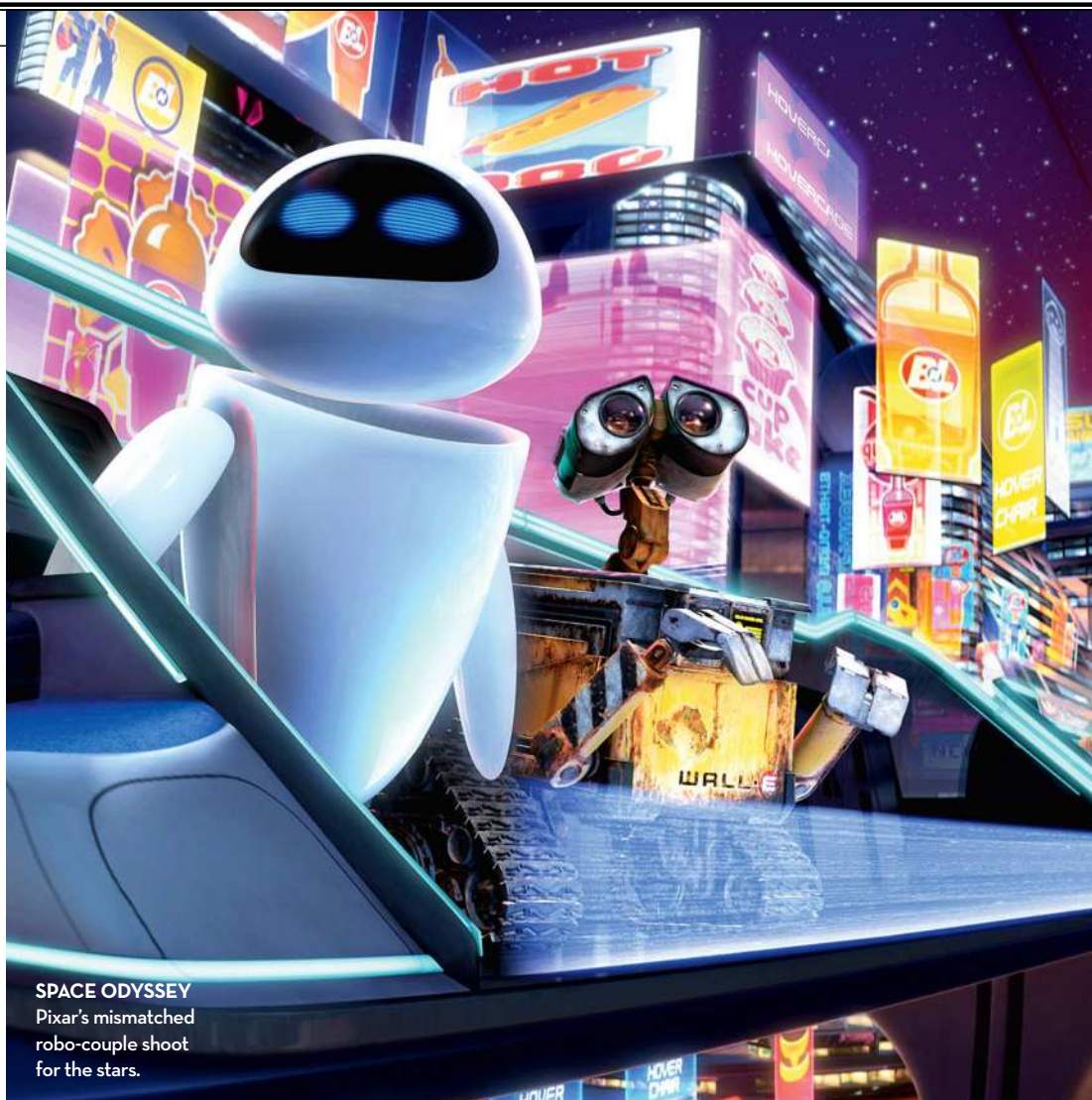
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- | | | |
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| ☐ Pan's Labyrinth | ☐ The NeverEnding Story | ☐ Ex Machina |
| ☐ Back To The Future | ☐ Close Encounters Of The Third Kind | ☐ Dark Star |
| ☐ Hellboy | ☐ A Scanner Darkly | ☐ Metropolis |
| ☐ The Truman Show | ☐ Stalker | ☐ Starship Troopers |
| ☐ District 9 | ☐ The Red Shoes | ☐ The Day The Earth Stood Still |
| ☐ Pinocchio | ☐ The Fifth Element | ☐ Pirates Of The Caribbean: The Curse Of The Black Pearl |
| ☐ Gravity | ☐ Edge Of Tomorrow | ☐ Star Wars: Episode VI - Return Of The Jedi |
| ☐ Donnie Darko | ☐ Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory | ☐ Looper |
| ☐ Pitch Black | ☐ Brazil | ☐ Ugetsu Monogatari |
| ☐ The Dark Crystal | ☐ It's A Wonderful Life | ☐ The Abyss |
| ☐ Akira | ☐ Silent Running | ☐ Moulin Rouge! |
| ☐ Her | ☐ Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs | ☐ Repo Man |
| ☐ Minority Report | ☐ Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope | ☐ The Matrix |
| ☐ Your Name. | ☐ Edward Scissorhands | ☐ The Wizard Of Oz |
| ☐ Quatermass And The Pit | ☐ A.I. Artificial Intelligence | ☐ The Princess Bride |
| ☐ Sleeper | ☐ Wolfwalkers | ☐ Independence Day |
| ☐ Serenity | ☐ Forbidden Planet | ☐ The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King |
| ☐ The Purple Rose Of Cairo | ☐ Interstellar | ☐ 2001: A Space Odyssey |
| ☐ Star Trek | ☐ The Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers | ☐ Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan |
| ☐ RoboCop | ☐ Jason And The Argonauts | ☐ Time Bandits |
| ☐ The Man Who Fell To Earth | ☐ Beauty And The Beast | ☐ Inception |
| ☐ My Neighbour Totoro | ☐ Sunshine | |
| | ☐ Labyrinth | |
| | ☐ Dune | |

WALL·E 2008

'bots with the bots.

01 You'll believe a robot can fall in love – and fly – in what is, to date, Pixar's only foray into speculative science-fiction: your everyday tale of a lonely trash 'bot whose life on a deserted Earth consumed by the detritus of consumerist society is given a jolt by an extraterrestrial vegetation evaluator (EVE for short) who steals its mechanical heart. Yet Andrew Stanton's film has more than romance on its mind, the subsequent escapades of WALL·E and EVE in space allowing it to imagine a world populated by couch potatoes who've surrendered both body and soul to morbid obesity. Dreamt up in the same meeting that resulted in *Finding Dory* and *Monsters, Inc.*, *Wall·E* is in its own gentle way as devastating a critique of humanity's future as *Planet Of The Apes* – albeit one that's far too good-natured to damn us all to hell. **NS**



SPACE ODYSSEY
Pixar's mismatched robo-couple shoot for the stars.

PLANET OF THE APES 1968

Monkey magic.

02 Crash landing on a distant planet, Chuck Heston and crew traverse the barren landscapes until they discover first plant life, then some eerie scarecrows, and then... Gorillas! On horseback! With firearms! Franklin J. Schaffner's iconic take on Pierre Boulle's 1963 novel is essentially a superbly sustained feature-length episode of *The Twilight Zone* – not surprisingly, Rod Serling did the first draft – and builds to its humdinger climax ("God damn you all to hell!") with intelligence, heart and wit. Four sequels and two TV series diluted the brand, to say nothing of Tim Burton's knuckle-dragging 2001 remake. The Apes rose once more via Weta-wizardry and the mo-cap magic of Andy Serkis in the reboot film series of the 2010s (*Rise Of The...*, *Dawn Of The...* and *War For The...*). **JG**



MOON 2009

Clone wars.

03 Appropriately for the son of David Bowie, Duncan Jones' feature debut is a space oddity, a narrative teaser in which Sam Rockwell was his very own Starman. Playing Sam Bell, an astronaut approaching the end of a three-year solo stint for a moon-based mining operation, Rockwell's vulnerable performance is a career-high as he discovers he's not – to quote the cheery Chesney Hawkes song used for his alarm call – "the one and only". Described by Jones as "a love letter to all those old science-fiction films", notably *Outland* and *Silent Running*, it wears its influences proudly: the Kevin Spacey-voiced computer GERTY borrows from 2001, just as Jones recruited *Alien*'s modelmaker Bill Pearson. With the desolate lunar base recreated at Shepperton Studios on a modest \$5m budget, unlike its hero, it's a real one-off. **JM**

GOJIRA 1954

Beast in show...

04 Hydrogen bomb tests disturb the titular beast from his deep-water habitat and, none too pleased, the 165ft dino sets about destroying Tokyo. Darker than the many Godzilla sequels that followed, Ishirô Honda's film evokes the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a man in a suit (stop-motion proved too expensive) stomps his way through miniatures so impressive they inspired George Lucas on *Star Wars*. Losing out to Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* at the Japanese Oscars, *Gojira*, like that masterpiece, stars the great Takashi Shimura, his palaeontologist adding gravitas to an already sober (but thrilling) picture. Hollywood has of course co-opted Japan's famous kaiju: Roland Emmerich's 1998 effort was disastrous; Gareth Edwards' 2014 homage got the Big G spot-on, less so the humans. **JG**

HE'LL BE BACK
Arnold Schwarzenegger
comes out guns blazing
as the Terminator.

THE TERMINATOR 1984

Rage against the machine.

05 After cutting his teeth under the tutelage of Roger Corman, writer/director James Cameron made *The Terminator* for just \$6.4m, and more than compensated for a few dodgy effects shots with pacy plotting and a succession of stupendous set-pieces. Michael Biehn and Linda Hamilton are perfect as future-soldier Kyle Reese and the waitress, Sarah Connor, he's sent back to 1984 to protect, but it's former Mr. Universe Arnold Schwarzenegger who steals the show as the titular T-800, an unstoppable killing machine who says just 58 words throughout. And to think, the role almost went to OJ Simpson, who might have been mouthing "I'll come back", as it was originally scripted. Cameron's supersized sequel *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* is also a masterpiece. As far as we're concerned, the franchise terminates there. **JG**



RING BEARER
Frodo (Elijah Wood)
prepares to go on
an adventure.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING 2001

The journey begins...

06 When Peter Jackson wrapped up *The Frighteners* in 1995, his thoughts turned to *The Lord Of The Rings* and “why nobody else seemed to be doing anything about it”. The answer is obvious: J.R.R. Tolkien single-handedly defined modern fantasy with his tale of the One Ring and the fellowship of men, elves, dwarves and hobbits who seek to destroy it – it would take someone with nerves of steel to do justice by Middle-earth on screen. Do justice Jackson did. From the playful Hobbiton introduction to the fierce orc attack in the Mines of Moria, few filmmakers have translated a world from page to screen this successfully. Smartly scripted, cast to perfection, majestically scored and vividly brought to life with ‘bigature’-based special effects that hold up phenomenally well to this day, *Fellowship* packs a hefty emotional punch alongside its bravura world-building. **JF**



A CLOCKWORK ORANGE 1971

The future's bleak...

07 Oh my brothers... even now, Stanley Kubrick's tale of riot, rape and reform feels shocking. Adapted from Anthony Burgess' dystopian novel, telling of Malcolm McDowell's Beethoven-loving tearaway Alex and his gang of 'Droogs', its impact was instant. Gaining four Oscar nods, including Best Picture, Kubrick famously pulled the film from British cinemas after threats to his family in the wake of links to copycat violence. With the film unavailable (legally, anyway) in the UK until Kubrick's death in 1999, cult status was assured. But it wasn't the only reason: the costumes (bowler hats and white dungarees inspiring a generation of Halloween costumes), Walter Carlos' synth soundtrack, the explicit sexual violence, the social subtext, and those drab concrete jungle locations all contributed. Like Alex, you'll never listen to Ludwig Van the same way again. **JM**

SOLARIS 1972

Journey of heart, mind and soul.

08 Andrei Tarkovsky's arthouse epic features spacecrafts, an outlying star system and alien intelligence, but is really a journey into deepest, darkest inner space – it was made as a response to 2001: A Space Odyssey and what Tarkovsky saw as Kubrick's obsession with technology. Adapted from Stanislaw Lem's 1961 novel, the plot sends cosmonaut psychologist Kris Kelvin (Donatas Banionis) to a space station orbiting an ocean-covered planet; upon arrival, he finds one of the three-man crew dead, the others haunted by apparitions, and he meets a duplicate of his dead wife (Natalya Bondarchuk). *Solaris* makes big demands on viewers' patience, but adjust yourself to its somnolent rhythm and murky meditations (existence, memory, spirituality) and you'll be amply rewarded. **JG**

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK 1981

Man on a mission.

09 John Carpenter's last two theatrical features, *The Fog* and *Halloween*, had established him as TheHorrorMaster (to use his Twitter handle), but he dusted off an old script and veered into sci-fi-action territory with *Escape From New York*. Set in a future 1997, it's the tale of hardnut criminal 'Snake' Plissken (a scowly Kurt Russell) being sent into Manhattan, now a maximum security prison, to retrieve the hijacked President (Donald Pleasence). Miniature models were employed for some effects shots, and a young James Cameron rendered matte paintings, but the bulk of the action was shot in east St. Louis, where entire neighbourhoods had been razed by a fire in 1976. The low budget only adds to the mood, making for a grungy, stylish B-movie. The same can't be said for 1996 sequel *Escape From LA*. **JG**

PRIMER 2004

Shit-hot time machine.

10 Despite being, essentially, a home movie – written, directed, shot, scored and edited by Shane Carruth for just \$7,000 – *Primer* is among the most plausible sci-fis ever made: “Not a matter of what if this happens?” according to its author, but “when”. By accident rather than design, white-collar scientists Aaron (Carruth, of course) and Abe (David Sullivan) create a time machine in the former's garage (actually Carruth's parents'), their ingenuity matching the film's extraordinary, DVD Making Of. But it's all design, no accidents with Carruth, who studied physics to sell the fiendishly techy dialogue and storyboarded every beautiful shot. Although Aaron and Abe's experiments lead them into a calamity of causal loops, *Primer* won Sundance's Grand Jury Prize and kickstarted Carruth's career as a micro-budget Malick. **MG**

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS 1956

Double trouble...

11 Set in the fictional California town of Santa Mira, Don Siegel's classic is the anti-*Independence Day* – no city-sized spaceships here, just a secret, silent takeover as emotionless ‘pod people’ replace the townsfolk. Sci-fi horror movies were all the rage in the 1950s (you might say they went nuclear), and this pacy adaptation of Jack Finney's novel *The Body Snatchers* is commonly read as a warning against the spread of communism. Other ascribed themes include religious indoctrination, psychotherapy and fear of technology, but this cracking B-picture also works as pure entertainment: “I did not want to preach,” said Siegel. There have been three remakes: Philip Kaufman's unnerving, same-titled '78 take; Abel Ferrara's decent '93 stab *Body Snatchers*; and Oliver Hirschbiegel's 2007 travesty, *The Invasion*. **JG**



DARK MAGIC
Ofelia (Ivana Baquero)
meets the terrifying
faun (Doug Jones).

PAN'S LABYRINTH 2006

Worth fauning over.

12 Everything that could go wrong did go wrong during the production of Guillermo del Toro's most personal film, a spellbinding blend of fantasy and harrowing reality as a young girl

(Ivana Baquero) escapes the horrors of fascism into an underground kingdom. But freak weather, political backbiting and a major set built to the wrong specifications, *Spinal Tap*-style, could not derail del Toro's vision, with his beautiful, heartfelt, sometimes-scary movie breaking out at the international box office and

bagging three Oscars. It also gave us two of the most memorable monsters in modern movies in the form of a trickster faun and the child-munching Pale Man, both played by Doug Jones. No wonder del Toro says, “People still come up and tell me how deeply *Pan's Labyrinth* affected their lives.” **JG**

BACK TO THE FUTURE 1985

1.21 gigawatts at 88 mph...

13 Intrigued by the notion of going back in time and hanging out with their parents, director Robert Zemeckis and writer Bob Gale expanded it into one of the biggest hits of the '80s: a comedy adventure sci-fi time-travel love story with a boldly incestuous subtext. Before that, however, they had to replace original lead Eric Stoltz with Michael J. Fox, work out how to turn a DeLorean into a plausible time machine *and* persuade Universal boss Sid Sheinberg that *Back To The Future* was a better title than his own suggestion, 'Spaceman From Pluto'. Their success in all departments is born out by a film that, three decades on, remains the quintessential heart-warmer: a perfect marriage of script and spectacle, built around one of fantasy cinema's goofiest and most loveable double acts. **NS**

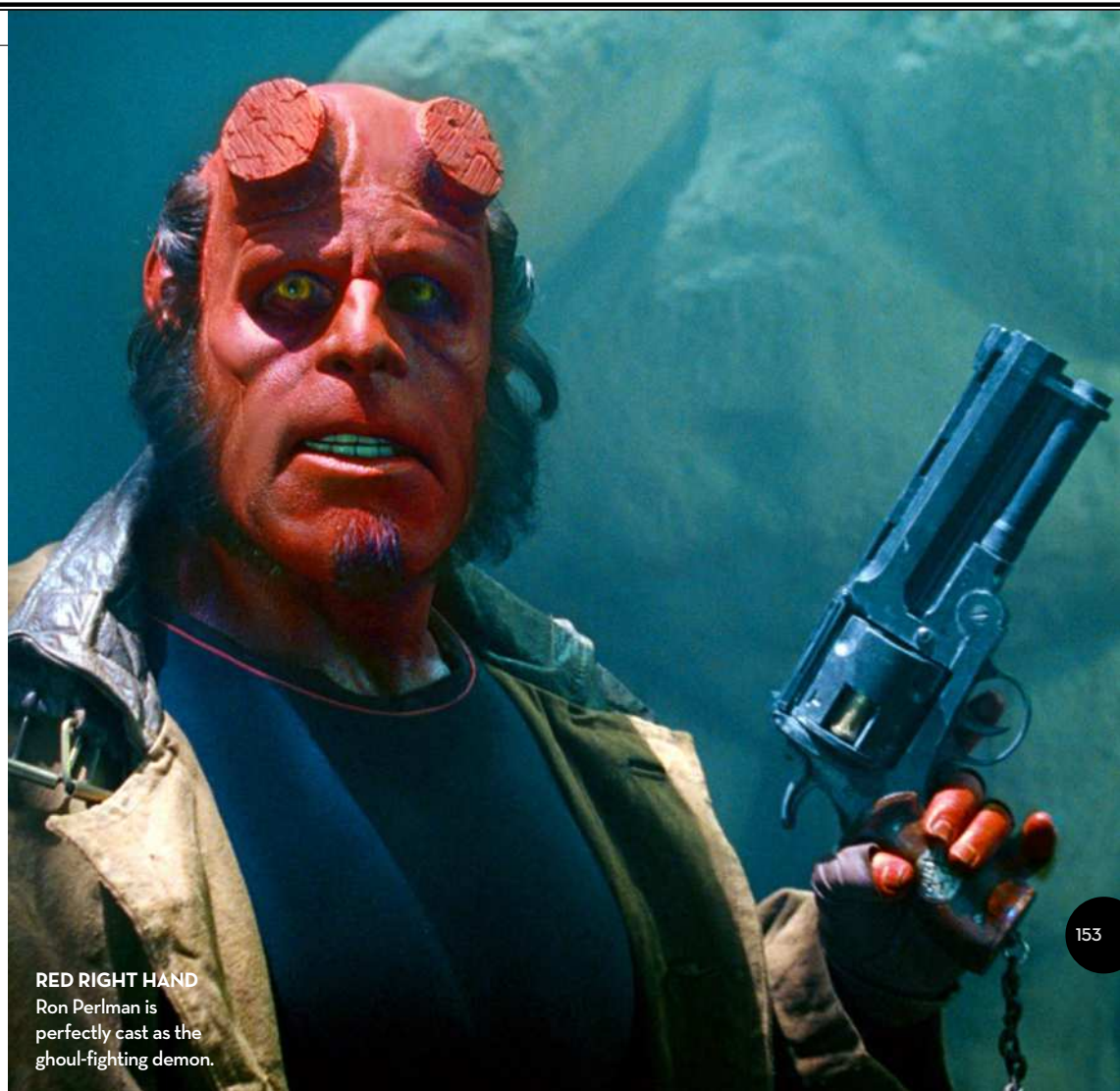
TIMELESS CLASSIC
Michael J. Fox hits the stage as time-travelling teen Marty McFly.



HELLBOY 2004

The big red one.

14 Comic-book heroes don't come much more outlandish than a huge crimson demon with a right-hand of doom and a couple of filed-down horns sprouting from his forehead. Thank bad-ness, then, his transition to the big screen was masterminded by Guillermo del Toro, possibly the only director who could transfer Mike Mignola's singular creation – a freak summoned by Nazis who fights on the side of the angels – from page to celluloid with its ghoulish texture and gallows humour intact. As with many of its fantasy brethren, the set-up is a lot more satisfying than the eventual pay-off. If the film leaves us hungry for more of Ron Perlman's wisecracking, cigar-chomping, monster-defeating devil-spawn, though, that is no great hardship – it meant we could enjoy 2008's *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*. **NS**

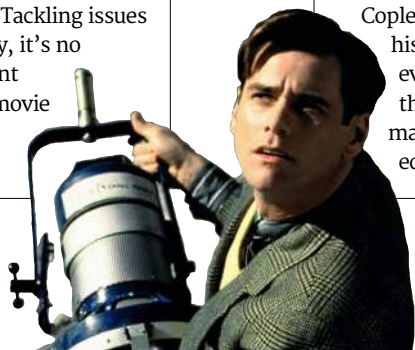


RED RIGHT HAND
Ron Perlman is perfectly cast as the ghoulish demon.

THE TRUMAN SHOW 1998

Tuning in.

15 Several years before the George Orwell-inspired *Big Brother* became the TV show of the 2000s, this prescient Andrew Niccol-scripted, Peter Weir-directed comedy-drama arrived. In a career-best role, Jim Carrey is Truman Burbank, raised from birth on a giant studio set, where his neighbours, friends and even wife are actors, and he is unwittingly the star of the world's most popular reality TV programme. Inspired by an episode of *The Twilight Zone*, the script was originally more of a sci-fi thriller, set in New York. But when Weir came on board, Niccol re-wrote, relocating it to the 'fake' coastal town of Seahaven (actually shot in Florida). Tackling issues of religion and philosophy, it's no wonder backers Paramount dubbed this \$60 million movie "the most expensive art film ever made". **JM**



DISTRICT 9 2009

Illegal aliens.

16 Concocted by first-time director Neill Blomkamp and producer Peter Jackson when their plans to adapt the videogame *Halo* fell through, *District 9*'s combination of Cronenbergian splatter and Orwellian outrage would be thrilling in any setting, but in South Africa it proves profound. Based on Blomkamp's 2005 short *Alive In Joburg*, and inspired by real events taking place during the apartheid era, the film details the violent displacement of a camp of alien visitors (nicknamed "prawns") by Sharlto Copley's shady military company. Blomkamp's rough-and-ready, reportage-style camerawork puts us in the fray, but it's Copley's growing humanity, even as his contaminated DNA makes him ever-more alien, that alerts us to the deeper truths: all lifeforms may be equal but some are more equal than others. **MG**

PINOCCHIO 1940

Walt's polished performance.

17 Choppy birth pains turned to ani-magic with Disney's second animated feature. Uncle Walt halted production six months in to wipe the wood clean and carve anew, worried about a lack of heart. Which was good news for Jiminy Cricket, who became the boy-of-bark's loveable friend in times of need – despite meeting a mallet in Carlo Collodi's story – and a much-needed centre of gravity for a film of fantastic richness. For Walt-watchers, it's the one with everything: yearning in Pinocchio's longings for life, carnival-esque clamour in Pleasure Island, surreal terror in the boy-to-donkey transformation scenes, trippy visuals in those pre-*Finding Nemo* underwater plunges, sadness in Pinocchio's near death (and Geppetto's man-sobs) and sublimity in 'When You Wish Upon A Star', smartly co-opted by Spielberg for *Close Encounters*. Magical: no strings. **KH**

GRAVITY 2013

Lost in space...

18 Four-and-a-half years in the making, Alfonso Cuarón's virtuoso white-knuckler is as close as most of us will ever get to actually walking in space – at times, a little *too* close. Shot against an almost entirely digital backdrop (with Framestore's beautiful SFX embellishing 80 of its 91 minutes), and mounted in luminous, lurching 3D, it shows the galaxy in all its agoraphobic glory, but hums with a very human sense of loneliness. After a debris shower destroys her shuttle, Sandra Bullock's dissociated Dr Stone is forced to fight for a life she's all but given up on, while stranded alone in the endless blackness. Earth proved much more receptive, awarding an unheard of (for the genre) seven Oscars including Best Director, while Buzz Aldrin declared himself "extravagantly impressed". **MG**



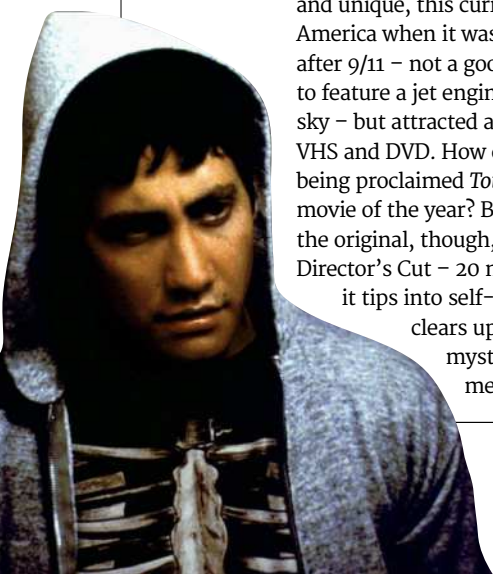
SPACED OUT

Sandra Bullock suits up in Alfonso Cuarón's nail-biting sci-fi.

DONNIE DARKO 2001

Mad world.

19 Boasting a little-known actor named Jake Gyllenhaal, a 6ft rabbit called Frank and an opaque plot involving schizophrenia, time travel, high school and the impending apocalypse, *Donnie Darko* sees debut filmmaker Richard Kelly fuse David Lynch and John Hughes in an '80s-set teen pic. At once cine-literate and unique, this curio flopped in America when it was released soon after 9/11 – not a good time for a movie to feature a jet engine falling from the sky – but attracted a cult following on VHS and DVD. How could it not after being proclaimed *Total Film*'s favourite movie of the year? Be sure to watch the original, though, and not the 2004 Director's Cut – 20 minutes longer, it tips into self-indulgence and clears up a good deal of the mystery that so mesmerised viewers. **JG**



PITCH BLACK 2000

Riddick-ulously good...

20 Before being dropped in the middle of a daft franchise-baiting space opera, Richard B. Riddick was the (anti) hero of this taut B-movie horror about a planet overrun by airborne alien nasties when it's plunged into eternal night every 22 years. Vin Diesel's dangerous crim, with his eerily silver see-in-the-dark eyes, sixth sense for death and wild animal mannerisms is the obvious standout – a character with enough charismatic intensity to burn a hole through the screen – but the film soars because he's one component in a much more satisfying whole. Director David Twohy's trippy visuals, Jim and Ken Wheat's economical script, with its steadfast refusal to present clear cut heroes and villains (Radha Mitchell's lead is effectively a mass murderer) and the freaky creatures all shine in a film shrouded in midnight darkness. **JF**

THE DARK CRYSTAL 1982

The wizardry of Oz.

21 Jim Henson and Frank Oz's puppet odyssey of a sprite-like 'Gelfling' hoping to stop the tyranny of the vulture-esque Skeksis by finding the titular lost gem may be ostensibly for kids, but sweet it ain't. Intricate world-building and plotting to rival *LOTR*, weighty themes (racism, genocide, mortality) plus puppets as terrifying as they are transporting, *The Dark Crystal* is dark. According to Oz, Henson was keen for tots to taste fear because "he didn't think it was healthy for children to always feel safe". The duo certainly succeeded, creating a multi-layered family movie that doesn't shy away from death, torture or slavery, but also provides scene-stealing cuteness from fluffball Fizzgig. Spectacular and scary, this febrile fantasy traumatised a generation and continues to affect audiences with its well-judged sense of foreboding and transformative finale. **JC**



AKIRA 1988

Anime magic...

22 In 1988 the world had never seen a film like *Akira*. Katsuhiro Ôtomo's groundbreaking anime didn't just introduce the west to Japanese animation, it ushered in an evolutionary leap for the genre. Adapted by Ôtomo from his own 2,182-page manga, the sprawling cyberpunk epic is set in a dystopian Neo-Tokyo, where a secret military project turns one adolescent biker into a telekinetic deity. Epic in scope and complex in its themes, the philosophical tale remains dense to this day. But it wasn't just the plot that seized imaginations in the early '90s, it was Ôtomo's staggering hand-drawn animation. From the diaphanous neon lights trailing Kaneda's iconic cherry-red cycle against the backdrop of Neo-Tokyo's vast midnight cityscape to the squelchy body horror finale, *Akira* set the visual standard for animated features. **JF**

HER 2013

Oh, yes, O.S.

23 In the early 2000s, Spike Jonze read an article about a website where the user could instant message with an artificial intelligence. Just as Spielberg was bringing Kubrick's treatment for *A.I.* to screens, it planted the seeds for what became an utterly unique sci-fi romance. Set in a futuristic Los Angeles (though partly shot in Shanghai), Joaquin Phoenix's introvert falls for his brand new artificially intelligent operating system, which he names Samantha. Crystallising our modern-day umbilical relationship with technology, like the best sci-fi it also holds a mirror up to humanity. "Really," said Jonze, "I'm writing about our relationship with each other and our relationship with ourselves." And let's face it: who wouldn't fall in love with an O.S. voiced by Scarlett Johansson? Windows 10... you've got a long way to go. **JM**

MINORITY REPORT 2002

Spielberg passes the Dick test...

24 Philip K. Dick's paranoid projections about a world where crimes are solved before they're committed find traction in Steven Spielberg's fight-or-flight sci-fi thriller. The result – more *A.I.* than *E.T.* – expertly marries the director's latter-day preference for intellectual grit to his thrill-seeking roots. Here's a tech-noir as attuned to our surveillance culture as *Blade Runner* was about the neon-soaked 1980s, especially in the conceptual gag of casting Tom Cruise, only to hide that famous face behind borrowed eyes and misshapen features. Made pre-Facebook and with the War on Terror in its infancy, it's proven remarkably prescient, perhaps because Spielberg assembled a squad of pundits (including *Generation X* author Douglas Coupland) to devise convincing gadgetry like the 'sick stick'. We already have swipe-sensitive computing and personalised advertising; how much else of the crew's '2054 Bible' will come true? **SK**

CRUISE CONTROL

Spielberg puts Tom Cruise through hell in his Philip K. Dick adaptation.



YOUR NAME. 2016

Boy meets girl.

25 A rare big-screen anime to achieve crossover mainstream success, Makoto Shinkai's 2016 'toon is inevitably getting the live-action remake treatment courtesy of JJ Abrams' Bad Robot Productions. It'll have its work cut out if it hopes to top the wondrous original. Mitsuha and Taki are Japanese high-school students separated by time and space, who inexplicably wake up in each other's bodies one day. Starting as a breezy and joyous body-swap comedy, it's a film that greatly widens its scope (everything from astral bodies to devastating natural disaster figures into the story) while never losing sight of the profound connection between its literally star-crossed heroes. Exquisitely animated – the chalk and pastel-hued flashback is a particular knockout – it's a full-package stunner that ensures you won't forget the name Makoto Shinkai in a hurry. **JF**



QUATERMASS AND THE PIT 1967

Going underground...

26 Released to lukewarm reviews ("well-made, but wordy, blob of hokum," sighed *Evening Standard*), this now stands as a classic of British sci-fi and one of Hammer's finest. It centres on the unearthing of an alien spacecraft during construction work at a London Underground station; not only did ETs shape human evolution, it transpires, but they might not be done with us yet... The effects have aged badly but the atmosphere is fully intact as legendary genre scribe Nigel Kneale blends superstition, religion and science into a creepy whole that's well-served by director Roy Ward Baker, here taking the first of six gigs for Hammer. Also worth seeing are forerunners *The Quatermass Xperiment* and *Quatermass 2*, which were themselves based on a BBC TV serial. **JG**



SLEEPER 1973

Woody Allen gets futuristic.

27 The very best of Woody Allen's 'earlier, funnier movies', *Sleeper* is set in the year 2173, as Woody's nebbish health food store owner awakens from cryogenic freezing to find himself in a fascist state. "You haven't had sex in 200 years?" he's asked. "204, if you count my marriage," comes the reply. Surpassing even the one-liners are the ceaseless sight gags that evoke Keaton, Chaplin et al – if Woody's not performing the greatest banana-skin pratfall in history, he's fighting off an instant pudding with a broom or strapping a helicopter contraption to his head and flapping his arms in a futile effort to take flight. Worth noting: this was the first time Woody directed Diane Keaton, though they appeared together in the previous year's *Play It Again, Sam*. **JG**

SERENITY 2005

One last mission...

28 When Joss Whedon's cult sci-fi show *Firefly* was cancelled after a scant 14 episodes, the fate of Captain Mal Reynolds (Nathan Fillion) and the crew of the *Serenity* was left in suspended animation. Miraculously, *Serenity* doesn't just work as a final chapter following a dozen hours of storytelling, it also serves as a perfect introduction to *Firefly*'s 'verse and tells a hugely satisfying standalone tale in the process. Essentially five years of TV on fast-forward, the interstellar western sees the rebellious crew of the *Serenity* expose a conspiracy at the heart of the galaxy's oppressive regime. Much of what made *Firefly* so memorable is present and correct: characters that fit together like a jigsaw, snappy dialogue, an irreverent sense of humour; but *Serenity* ups the action stakes considerably and injects a powerful sense of consequence and loss, leaving the world on a high. **JF**



THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO 1985

The magic of movies.

29 Downtrodden waitress Cecilia (Mia Farrow) repeatedly visits the local picture palace to escape the drudgery of her life, and her wildest dreams come true when Tom Baxter (Jeff Daniels), the romantic lead in RKO movie *The Purple Rose Of Cairo*, steps out of the screen to sweep her off her feet. Often cited by Woody Allen as the film he's most pleased with, this charming fable is set in '30s New Jersey against the backdrop of the Depression – all the better for the warmth and wit of the central relationship to sparkle in the foreground. Allen gets good mileage from the bickering characters left twiddling thumbs on screen when their leading man disappears, and *TPROC* is clearly personal – Allen himself spent much of his formative years in Brooklyn's movie houses. **JG**



STAR TREK 2009

An enterprising reboot...

30 Before he brought *Star Wars* back to unanimous adulation, J.J. Abrams pulled a near-identical trick with *Star Trek*, reinvigorating the space series with a dose of 21st Century adrenaline. An impactful opening sequence serves as a hugely impressive statement of intent, but the real genius of Abrams' *Trek* is its savvy narrative gymnastics – a crucial time-travel conceit that makes it both sequel and reboot – appealing newcomers and die-hard Trekkies. As the film's central triumvirate, Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto and Karl Urban are eerily true to the original characters, while Leonard Nimoy returns for a touching reprisal of the role he made famous. By destroying Vulcan, a gutsy move by anyone's standards, it set a precedent for huge change; the only disappointment is that sequel *Star Trek Into Darkness* squandered so much potential. **JF**

DELTA CITY

THE FUTURE HAS A SILVER LINING.

ROBOCOP 1987

Part sci-fi actioner. Part satirical comedy. All good.

31 A satirical sci-fi that plays like an R-rated *Iron Man* (the comic even gets an on-screen nod), *RoboCop* tells the story of Alex Murphy (Peter Weller), a murdered cop who's resurrected as a mechanical law enforcement officer in a dystopian near-future Detroit. It's hard to tell what poses a bigger threat out of the criminals running riot or the capitalist conglomerate, Omni Consumer Products, taking over the city. Marking director Paul Verhoeven's first major foray into Hollywood filmmaking, its pairing of ultraviolence and on-the-nose humour gave it instant cult status. Inspired by 2000AD's *Judge Dredd*, the film's own legacy includes a string of lesser sequels, TV spin-offs, videogames and comics, including crossovers with its '80s sci-fi counterpart *The Terminator*. An unloved remake confirmed the original's timelessness; Ken Russell dubbed it the best sci-fi film since *Metropolis*. **MM**

GOOD COP
Peter Weller's officer gets an upgrade in near-future Detroit.



EARTH BOUND
David Bowie makes his
big-screen debut as a
humanoid alien.

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH 1976

Bowie's starman...

32 In retrospect, casting David Bowie – in his first ever screen role – as the alien who crash-lands on our planet while seeking water for his own drought-stricken outcrop seems like a no-brainer. “I don’t know if it was immediate,” director Nicolas Roeg later reflected. Either way, his instincts served him well. Addicted to cocaine at the time, Bowie was in ghastly shape: pale, thin and spectral – perfectly chiselled to play Thomas Jerome Newton, the humanoid who uses alien tech to acquire incredible wealth before he succumbs to Earthly pleasures like sex and alcohol. While the film’s original release was minimal, its cult status grew exponentially. Everything from Bowie’s own album artwork for *Low* and *Station To Station* to Michael Fassbender’s performance in *Prometheus* drew from this surreal and seminal kaleidoscope. **JM**



MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO 1988

Everybody needs good neighbours...

33 Arguably the most beloved film in Studio Ghibli’s back catalogue (it’s Terry Gilliam’s favourite animated film), *My Neighbour Totoro* blends the animation house’s twin pillars of fantasy and pared-back naturalism in one enchanting story. It’s 1958, and two sisters move with their father to a house closer to their hospitalised mother. The old place is home to tiny soot sprites, and in the back garden they find forest spirits, including the giant Totoro. The otherworldly creature – something like a cross between a rabbit, an owl and bear – is benevolent, if not exactly cuddly, and has such a folkloric resonance it’s hard to believe director Hayao Miyazaki created the mythology from scratch. Disney oversaw an English language dub in 2005, and among various other pop-cultural homages, Totoro appeared in teddy form in a *Toy Story 3* cameo. **MM**

BELLE DE JOUR 1967

Wildest fantasies.

34 Luis Buñuel’s most famous film gives Catherine Deneuve her most iconic role: housewife Séverine, in love with her doctor husband but unable to share physical intimacy. Not that she’s without desire: her BDSM fantasies lead her to take work as a high-class prostitute. With hardcore S&M now just a click away, *Belle De Jour* is nowhere near as scandalous as when it came out, but its erotic charge remains undiminished – Buñuel’s film shows little and suggests plenty, understanding that nothing stimulates like the imagination. All of the fantasies here, imagined or carried out, are based on conversations that Buñuel had with real women, and *Belle De Jour*, though defying a single interpretation, is often cited as a feminist movie. It certainly whips *Fifty Shades Of Grey*. **JG**

THX 1138 1971

Attack of the chrome domes.

35 For his first feature, George Lucas trimmed the title of his original student short *Electronic Labyrinth: THX 1138 4EB* but upscaled his ambitions, delivering a box-office flop that's become the cultiest thing he's ever done. Hardly an easy film – especially compared with *Star Wars'* ray-gun heroics – it provokes, fascinates and unsettles with its vision of a sexless, hairless future controlled by faceless, pitiless cops. Unlike later Lucas, it shows rather than tells; instead of exposition there's Walter Murch's extraordinary wraparound sound design. And unlike many a '70s tale of tomorrow's world, it hasn't curdled into camp over the years. The final image of Robert Duvall watching the sun is one of Lucas' most evocative – no wonder he'd double down on it for his next sci-fi odyssey... **ML**

THE IRON GIANT 1999

A tin man with heart...

36 Brad Bird's directorial debut was not a box-office success upon release. On the surface, it doesn't have the components for a mainstream animated hit, given its 1950s Cold War setting and lack of cutesy sidekicks or catchy tunes, but its standing has continued to grow exponentially ever since. Loosely adapted from Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man*, Bird evokes the paranoia of the '50s' real-world and genre preoccupations. At its heart this is a 'boy and his dog' story, where the dog is a 50-foot robot created as a weapon (brought to life with CGI, he blends perfectly with the traditionally animated backdrop), and only the hardest heart would fail to find their eyes moistening when the scrapheap-bound behemoth gets his Superman moment. Also contains Vin Diesel's most touching voicework (sorry Groot). **MM**

CRASH 1996

Cars and scars...

37 David Cronenberg's adaptation of J.G. Ballard's sex 'n' wrecks opus was banned in the West End and left *Evening Standard* critic Alexander Walker feeling "debased and degraded". Strange, because this rigorous adaptation eschews graphic violence and/or sex in favour of cool lensing, dispassionate voyeurism and a narcotic atmosphere, as car-crash survivor James Ballard (James Spader) penetrates a sub-culture of weirdos turned on by twisted metal and ragged wounds. The film's otherworldly vibe and newfangled auto-erotica – the convergence of flesh and technology – lend a sci-fi tinge to the drama, making all this sexual compulsion, well, compulsive. Esteemed magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma* placed *Crash* eighth in its best films of the '90s poll, and you'd have to be a (crash test) dummy to disagree. **JG**

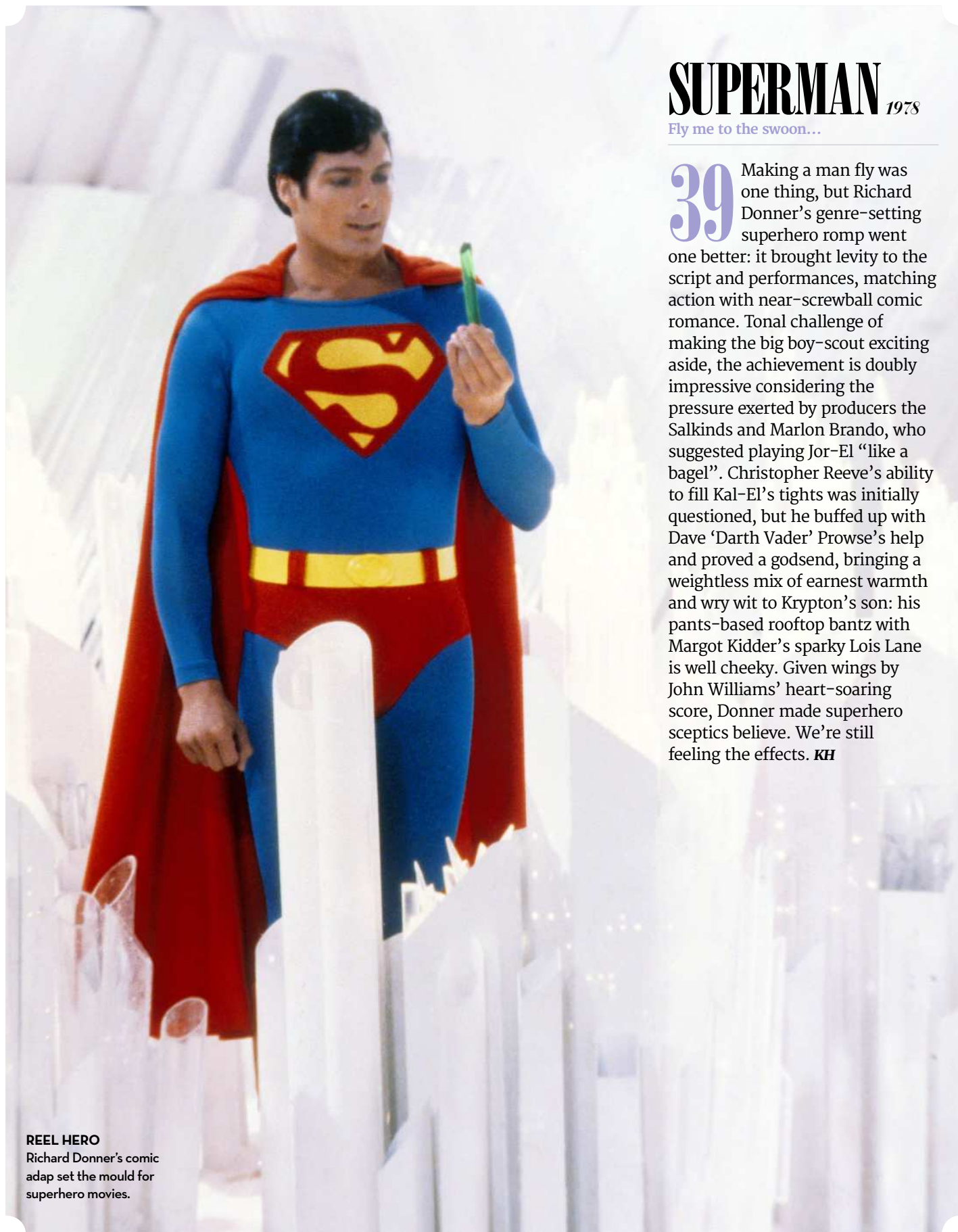
ARRIVAL 2016

Language lessons.

38 Before building the awe-inspiring future worlds of *Dune* and *Blade Runner 2049*, Denis Villeneuve directed *Arrival* – a sci-fi film that plays out on a smaller canvas, but has equally big ideas at play. Adapted from a brain-bending short story, it's the anti-*Independence Day* – a first-contact tale about linguistic communication rather than jingoistic domination, where Amy Adams' professor and Jeremy Renner's physicist are recruited by the US army to translate the complex written language of two seven-limbed 'heptapods'. Villeneuve's unparalleled visual imagination is on full display when it comes to depicting the visitors and their vessels, which dominate the skylines where they settle. But the emotional intelligence of Eric Heisserer's script, which bookends cosmic events with devastatingly intimate scenes of domestic trauma, should not be underestimated. **JF**



SPELLING IT OUT
Linguist Louise Banks (Adams) attempts to communicate with the mysterious heptapods.



SUPERMAN 1978

Fly me to the swoon...

39 Making a man fly was one thing, but Richard Donner's genre-setting superhero romp went one better: it brought levity to the script and performances, matching action with near-screwball comic romance. Tonal challenge of making the big boy-scout exciting aside, the achievement is doubly impressive considering the pressure exerted by producers the Salkinds and Marlon Brando, who suggested playing Jor-El "like a bagel". Christopher Reeve's ability to fill Kal-El's tights was initially questioned, but he buffed up with Dave 'Darth Vader' Prowse's help and proved a godsend, bringing a weightless mix of earnest warmth and wry wit to Krypton's son: his pants-based rooftop bantz with Margot Kidder's sparky Lois Lane is well cheeky. Given wings by John Williams' heart-soaring score, Donner made superhero sceptics believe. We're still feeling the effects. **KH**

REEL HERO

Richard Donner's comic adap set the mould for superhero movies.

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH 1946

Stairway to heaven.

40 Tasked by the Ministry of Information to boost wartime Anglo-American relations with “a big film”, Brit-flick duo Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger went duly large. Toggling between life and the afterlife, the Archers’ romantic fantasy hinges on a should-be-dead RAF pilot (David Niven) who somehow survives, finds love and argues his right to life in celestial court. The Archers spawned the idea in 1944, but it took until 1945 for the Ministry to release Technicolor stocks for the inverted *Wizard Of Oz* aesthetic: Technicolor for life, monochrome for heaven. The lavishly staged, sumptuously styled, immersively shot (by Jack Cardiff) pay-off included some very British in-jokes (the “pea-souper”) but broke from Brit-reserve to stress heart over head in one sublime, pivotal image: a tear on a petal. **KH**



AVATAR 2009

Welcome to the jungle...

41 Bookended by opening peepers, James Cameron’s space-safari adventure aspired to reopen our senses to large-scale cine-immersion, an ambition anchored by something more basic: if stereoscopic cinema’s hit-rate has wobbled since, Cameron’s trip to a groovy wonderland remains robust because of its sturdy narrative roots. Writing broadly, seeing boldly, Cameron brings a crisp pulp punch to the story of Jake Sully’s Na’vi conversion. That mighty box-office catch suggests viewers were converted too, but you don’t need “all that cheddar” to see why *Avatar* works. Pulling prog-rock imagery, full-blooded perf-caps, archetypal sweeps, weepy romance and his career-long fascination with bio/tech exchanges into one soaring package, Cameron reminded us that a plunge into a world’s wonders can still transport audiences. **KH**



PRINCESS MONONOKE 1997

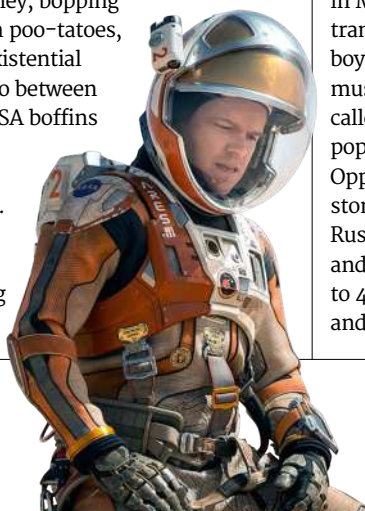
Fight for the forest...

42 If Kurosawa had made cartoons, he might have delivered something like Hayao Miyazaki’s full-blooded eco-fable, a huge leap forward for Studio Ghibli’s Japanimation giant. Moral lines blur in this grown-up, complex and sometimes violent fable of a warrior and a wolf girl entangled in fierce forest tussles between animal gods and polluting iron miners. Comparisons to *Avatar* spring to mind, although Miyazaki allows more grey shades: the human/nature stand-off climaxes on a note of tentative reconciliation. He used much less CGI, too, notching up just 15 minutes’ worth for Prince Ashitaka’s serpentine arm among 144,000 hand-painted cels, of which Miyazaki personally oversaw 80,000. “There was a lot of suffering,” he admitted, and contemplated retiring afterwards. We’re all the richer that he didn’t: but he would have gone out on a high. **JG**

THE MARTIAN 2015

Get your ass to Mars...

43 Ridley Scott’s best since *Gladiator*, *The Martian* strands Matt Damon on (duh) Mars with nothing but his keenly scientific brain to keep him from perishing. Sombre, right? Boring, yeah? Pull the other one – Drew Goddard’s script, based on Andy Weir’s fact-heavy novel, is so funny and ebullient it found itself in the Best Musical or Comedy category at the Golden Globes. Damon excels as plucky astro-botanist Mark Watney, bopping to disco and munching on poo-tatoes, while Scott leavens the existential horror by cutting with brio between our man on Mars, the NASA boffins on Earth and, in their spaceship in between, the rest of Watney’s crew. Kudos, too, for shooting the pivotal sandstorm set-piece practically using 4,000 tonnes of sand. **JG**



THE JUNGLE BOOK 1967

Shere charm.

44 Jon Favreau’s ‘live-action’ reboot offers dizzying digital effects, confident storytelling and indelible beasts with famous voices, but Disney’s beloved animation – the studio’s 19th, and the last to be personally supervised by Uncle Walt before his death – still wins out. Loosely adapting Rudyard Kipling’s collected fables, it follows the life-lesson adventures of young orphan boy Mowgli, raised in the jungle among friends (black panther Bagheera, bear Baloo) and foes (tiger Shere Khan, snake Kaa). The characters are iconic, the hand-painted backgrounds beguile and the score is Disney’s best, while the ending is at once heartwarming and tearjerking. In fact, the only imaginable way that *The Jungle Book* could be better is if the Beatles really had voiced the mop-topped vultures, as originally intended. **JG**



THE NEVERENDING STORY 1984

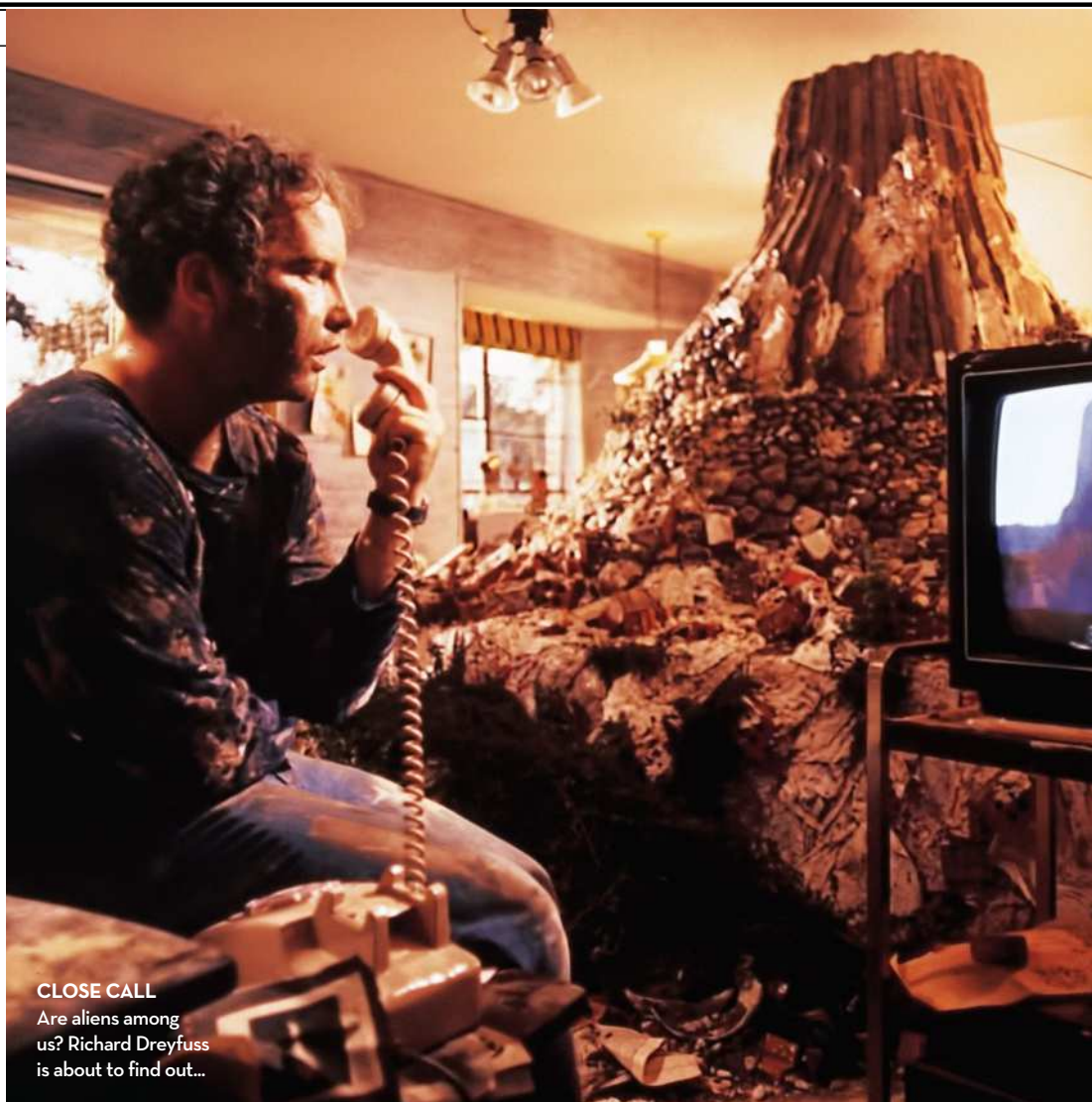
Riding to the rescue...

45 “A gigantic melodrama of kitsch, commerce, plush and plastic,” huffed author Michael Ende, so annoyed by Wolfgang Petersen’s adaptation of his book (or rather, the first half of it) that he sued to get the title changed. He lost, and really should have chilled out – there’s something truly magical about the world that Petersen created at the Bavaria Studios in Munich; the sets, effects and music transporting viewers to Fantasia, where boy-warrior Atreyu (Noah Hathaway) must find faith in order to banish a force called ‘The Nothing’. Best of the many pop-up beasts are two voiced by Alan Oppenheimer – Rockbiter, a giant stone-creature with a voice like Mount Rushmore chewing on Vin Diesel, and flying dragon-dog Falkor – built to 43ft in length, fully motorised, and covered in 6,000 scales. **JG**

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND 1977

Re Mi Do Do So...

46 Effectively a remake of Steven Spielberg's high-school opus *Firelight*, *CEOTTK* is the most crystallised example of the director's compulsion to channel his inner child: an awe-struck imagining of how neat it might be to meet aliens, like, for real. Richard Dreyfuss is the Beard's stand-in: an all-American Joe who, like the Biblical Magi before him, follows mysterious lights in the sky towards a transcendent experience that, thanks to FX that still look the business four decades on, we get to share in all its kitschy glory. OK, so maybe Spielberg would have been better off leaving the ETs to our imagination. If the half-child, half-puppet aliens fail to evoke the requisite sense of wonder, though, they are at least more plausible than the once-mooted alternative: orang-utans on roller-skates. **NS**



CLOSE CALL
Are aliens among us? Richard Dreyfuss is about to find out...

A SCANNER DARKLY 2006

Dude, where's your head at?

47 After too many low-class Philip K. Dick adaptations, the lovingly cooked mood-mix of Richard Linklater's drug-paranoia animation came close to the cut of the writer's original vision. In a case of movie tech and Dick's powers of foresight in perfect sync, the mo-cap rotoscoping aesthetic is well matched to the slippery reality met by Keanu Reeves' narc as he investigates a widespread Substance D problem. But what Linklater also fully imbibed, in his words, was Dick's "humour and the full range of his characters": that oscillation between future prescience and wry, work-a-day banality. Putting aside innovations such as Reeves' groovy "scramble suit", *Scanner's* stoner babble exudes grass-roots authenticity: Robert Downey Jr. and Woody Harrelson seemed to understand the bad-trip terrain Dick himself occupied in the '70s. **KH**

STALKER 1979

Walk and talk...

48 Godard said that all you need to make a movie is a girl and a gun; Tarkovsky might have said that all you need to make a sci-fi film are some blokes and a field. The last production that the Russian director made in his native Soviet Union, *Stalker* is set in a police state and sees a character named, uh, Stalker (Aleksandr Kaidanovsky), lead Writer (Anatoliy Solonitsyn) and Professor (Nikolai Grinko) through a forbidden wasteland to a room where innermost desires are granted. Comprising philosophical discussions taking place against backdrops littered with industrial detritus, *Stalker* muses issues ecological, political and biblical. The colour scheme is suitably drab (yet starkly beautiful), and there are just 142 shots in the 163-minute running time, giving viewers plenty of time to ponder. **JG**

THE RED SHOES 1948

Magnificent obsession.

49 Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger made at least six masterpieces together during their 30-plus-year collaboration, and this, arguably, is the best of the best. The *Black Swan* of its day, it demonstrates the mental anguish and physical torture endured by the artist, as Moira Shearer's prima ballerina catapults to fame under the exacting eye of company director Anton Walbrook. Swirling with ambition, jealousy, love, eroticism and terror, *The Red Shoes* is a riot of blazing colour and rhapsodic choreography, with the titular ballet making for one of the most magical, imaginative, breathlessly exciting sequences ever committed to celluloid. Scorsese, of course, is its biggest fan, saying, "In the movement and energy of the filmmaking itself, is a deep and abiding love of art, a belief in art as a genuinely transcendent state." **JG**



THE FIFTH ELEMENT 1997

Teenage kicks.

50 There's a good reason why *The Fifth Element* feels like a film written by a teenager – it was. Luc Besson had just turned 16 when he began writing his high-camp pop sci-fi, and it shows with its child-like tale of an ancient evil unleashed on the world, an unwitting alpha-male hero and a powerful, scantily-clad saviour. Embrace its simple story beats, however, and *The Fifth Element's* appeal is obvious. Besson invested every penny of the \$90m budget into building a world the screen had never seen the like of before, enlisting French comic legend Jean 'Moebius' Giraud to work on production design and famed fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier to give a unique flavour to the film's lavish costumes. The result is a film that's not just visually spectacular, but a true one of a kind. **JF**

EDGE OF TOMORROW 2014

Game over, and over, and over...

51 Culled from Hiroshi Sakurazaka's Japanese military sci-fi novella *All You Need Is Kill*, Doug Liman's punk sci-fi caught most cinema-goers by surprise. A blockbuster with brains bursting from its fatigues, it's *Groundhog Day* meets *Starship Troopers*, all set on a futuristic Earth swamped by tentacle-spouting extra-terrestrials. "I just fell in the love with the idea," Liman said. "Your hero gets killed 10 minutes in." And killed. And killed. And killed some more. Intentionally aping the videogame experience, as players re-spawn after dying, Tom Cruise's naive combatant Major William Cage finds himself caught in a time-loop, forced to relive the same moments and 'level up' before an alien gets medieval on his ass. And that's before Emily Blunt, in her exoskeleton battle suit, brings us the best sci-fi heroine since Ripley. Hardcore. **JM**

WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY 1971

Golden ticket to pure imagination...

52 Roald Dahl provided fuel for visionaries from Nicolas Roeg to Wes Anderson, but cinema's most enduring adaptation remains Mel Stuart's tour of Gene Wilder's candy factory. The sweetness could easily have turned sour: the film was a glorified advert for the financiers' own Wonka bar, while Dahl reportedly hated the addition of a 'corporate espionage' subplot. Yet it captures the author's mischievous mood better than Tim Burton's more reverential 2005 version. This takes the best of Dahl – the story, the satirical invention, the mix of cruelty and compassion – and adds cinematic flourishes: colour, slapstick, and singalong Bricusse/Newley showtunes. The psychedelic production and costume design remain an Everlasting Gobstopper, while the druggy, Oompa-Loopy atmosphere exerted by Wilder – wide-eyed, nasal and authentically mad – extends to a disturbing 'bad trip' on the Chocolate River. **SK**



CANDY MAN
Gene Wilder is unnervingly unhinged as factory owner Willy Wonka.

BRAZIL 1985

Dare to dream big.

53 Developed under the title *1984 1/2*, Terry Gilliam's retro-futurism masterpiece conjures a noir-tinged bureaucracy that stifles dreamer Sam Lowry (Jonathan Pryce), a low-level employee at the Ministry of Information, as he investigates a clerical error resulting in the death of an innocent man. How ironic that this triumph of imagination and design, concerned as it is with satirising the oppressive Establishment, was initially cut and denied a US opening by Universal. Gilliam's response? To take out a page ad in trade bible *Variety* campaigning for his movie's release, and to generate positive word of mouth by secretly screening *Brazil* to film schools and critics. Sure enough, David bested Goliath and the writer/director's bleakly amusing dystopian vision was hailed as the year's best picture by Los Angeles critics. **JG**



FIRST KNIGHT
Jonathan Pryce's
ministry employee
prepares for battle.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE 1946

Attaboy, Clarence.

54 Timeless is an over-used adjective but Frank Capra's celluloid hug is the genuine article, telling the story of family man George (James Stewart), driven to suicide amid financial meltdown and given a chance to review his life by a guardian angel. In a Dickensian twist, since borrowed by everything from *Back To The Future* to *Sliding Doors*, George sees a parallel existence and understands the wonder of his world. Melancholy without being maudlin, heartwarming but not cloying, this five-Oscar-nommed slice of Americana is beautifully played and directed (luxurious one-shot scenes) and infectiously joyous in its final payoff. Yes, it's sentimental, but it also explores bleak themes of small town suffocation, compromise, greed and weakness, and understands human fascination with the 'what ifs' of life. Hot dog, indeed! **JC**

SILENT RUNNING 1972

The greenhouse effect.

55 Special effects whiz Douglas Trumbull (2001: A Space Odyssey and later Oscar-nominated for *Blade Runner*) made his directorial debut with this flower-power curio, and the tagline to Kubrick's masterpiece – 'the ultimate trip' – would have worked just as well here. Set in a future where all flora is extinct on Earth, it posits a huge spacecraft that houses one last garden. Then the crew receive orders to destroy it, an instruction that sends hippy astronaut Freeman Lowell (a likeable Bruce Dern) rogue: he stubbornly tends to this Eden with the help of some brilliantly low-fi drones, and finally sends it out into deep space in the hope of new beginnings. *Silent Running* is not always a smooth ride – its pacing tests patience and Trumbull's direction takes a while to find its way – but it's a film of ideas, sincerity and a seriously moving climax. **JG**

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS 1937

Disney lands...

56 Pre-release doubters dubbed it 'Disney's folly': how many people would want to sit through a movie-length cartoon? Tons, it turned out – few films have put more bums on seats than Walt's spellbinding and still-scary take on the Grimm bros' fairytale. True, Snowy herself is a bit wishy-washy; she's either fleeing, sleeping or scrubbing steps. But mirror, mirror on the wall, Lucille La Verne's Queen remains the wickedest villainess of them all, especially when touting dodgy apples in her warty-witch disguise. As for the little folk, Uncle Walt packs more dwarf characterisation into 83 minutes than Peter Jackson managed in three *Hobbit* movies. Dopey and co. can really carry a tune, too – small wonder that the earworm-heavy soundtrack ('Heigh-Ho' et al) was the first ever to be spun-off as an album. **ML**

STAR WARS: EPISODE IV — A NEW HOPE 1977

The Force awakens...

57 “There’s no breather in the picture, no lyricism; the only attempt at beauty is in the double sunset,” sniffed critic Pauline Kael when George Lucas’ game-changing space opera hit cinemas. You might say she rather missed the point. With its worn-out, weather-beaten aesthetic, this eclectic blend of *Flash Gordon* serials, Akira Kurosawa’s *The Hidden Fortress* and Joseph Campbell mythology never aspired to such lofty ideals. Set in a galaxy far, far away from Lucas’ more clinical earlier sci-fi, *THX 1138*, this tale of a farm boy from a desert planet who joins a rebellion and rescues a princess was pure science-fantasy. Amid a unique yet strangely recognisable universe of droids, Death Stars and dog-fights, it became a pop-culture, generation-spanning phenomenon. And in Luke, Leia and Han, it gave us heroes that still leave us cheering. **JM**

DOUBLE DROID
A *New Hope*
introduced R2-D2
and C-3PO.

CUTTING EDGE

Edward Scissorhands (Johnny Depp) finds his true calling.



EDWARD SCISSORHANDS 1990

Burton cuts a rug...

58 Establishing the cut of his Johnny Depp collaborations in a mix of fetish wear, communication issues and iconic father/mentor figures, Tim Burton's finest film snips out a lovingly tended patch of outsider pathos and charm. Burton ignored tabloid tittle-tattle to spy a tenderness in Depp, who responded with a funny, touching and oddly truthful show of vulnerability, warmth and eccentricity. For Burton, the oddness wasn't just surface-play: the idea for this "hypersensitive madman" dates back to his teens. "Just an image that I liked," he said of old sorry-eyed snipper digits. His friendly Frankenstein's fable was rejected by some studios, but the personal touch turned a timeless fable of sweetly sad alienation into sublimely singular cinema. Sometimes, you can still catch us dancing in the snow... **JG**



A.I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 2001

We are the robots...

59 Debate around Steven Spielberg's adoption of Stanley Kubrick's Brian Aldiss adap has evolved over time. For a while, doubters preferred Kubrick's sharp stew of contempo-pessimism to Spielberg's emotional yoghurt. But that simplifies the rich meld of warm intellect/cool yearning in the electro-Pinocchio fable of boy-bot Haley Joel Osment's desire for life. Spielberg channelled what he called the "gentle heart" of Kubrick's treatment into startlingly double-edged images: an *E.T.*-style moon presages *Jurassic*-style terror, the closing shot merges sweetening bliss with aching brevity. If what makes us human is *A.I.*'s core beard-tugging conundrum, it's the fluent currents of mind/emotion that provide its lingering power. **KH**

WOLFWALKERS 2020

Magic hour.

60 The third and final instalment in Cartoon Saloon's Irish Folklore Trilogy following *The Secret Of Kells* and *Song Of The Sea*, *Wolfwalkers* ends the spiritually connected series on a soaring high. Longstanding proponents of hand-drawn animation, Cartoon Saloon's style here blends a woodblock aesthetic and impressionistic line work to dazzling effect. Set in the 17th century against the thinly veiled backdrop of Oliver Cromwell's invasion of Ireland, it's about an English girl called Robyn who encounters and befriends a tribe of shapeshifting wolves – a problematic fact as Robyn's father is in Ireland to exterminate the wolf population. Thematically rich (animal rights, environmental destruction and social polarisation are all tackled head-on), and beautifully performed, it's the visuals that will stick with you, not least of which is a joyous sequence soundtracked by Aurora's aggressive earworm 'Running With The Wolves'. **JF**

FORBIDDEN PLANET 1956

A brave new world...

61 Sci-fi and Shakespeare conjoin in a hugely influential reworking of *The Tempest* whose fingerprints can be seen on everything from *Star Trek* to the great British high street. Set on a distant orb whose sole inhabitants seem to be a genius scientist (Walter Pidgeon), his beautiful daughter (Anne Francis) and a helpful robot, Fred M. Wilcox's film boasts many of the tropes that would come to define the genre: intergalactic space travel, futuristic sets and technology, and a monstrous threat with a yen for offing conveniently disposable cast members. Decades before *Airplane!* and *The Naked Gun* made a mockery of his stone-jawed heroism, Leslie Nielsen plays it admirably straight as a starship captain who boldly goes where few men have gone before, and from where even fewer will come back alive. **NS**

INTERSTELLAR 2014

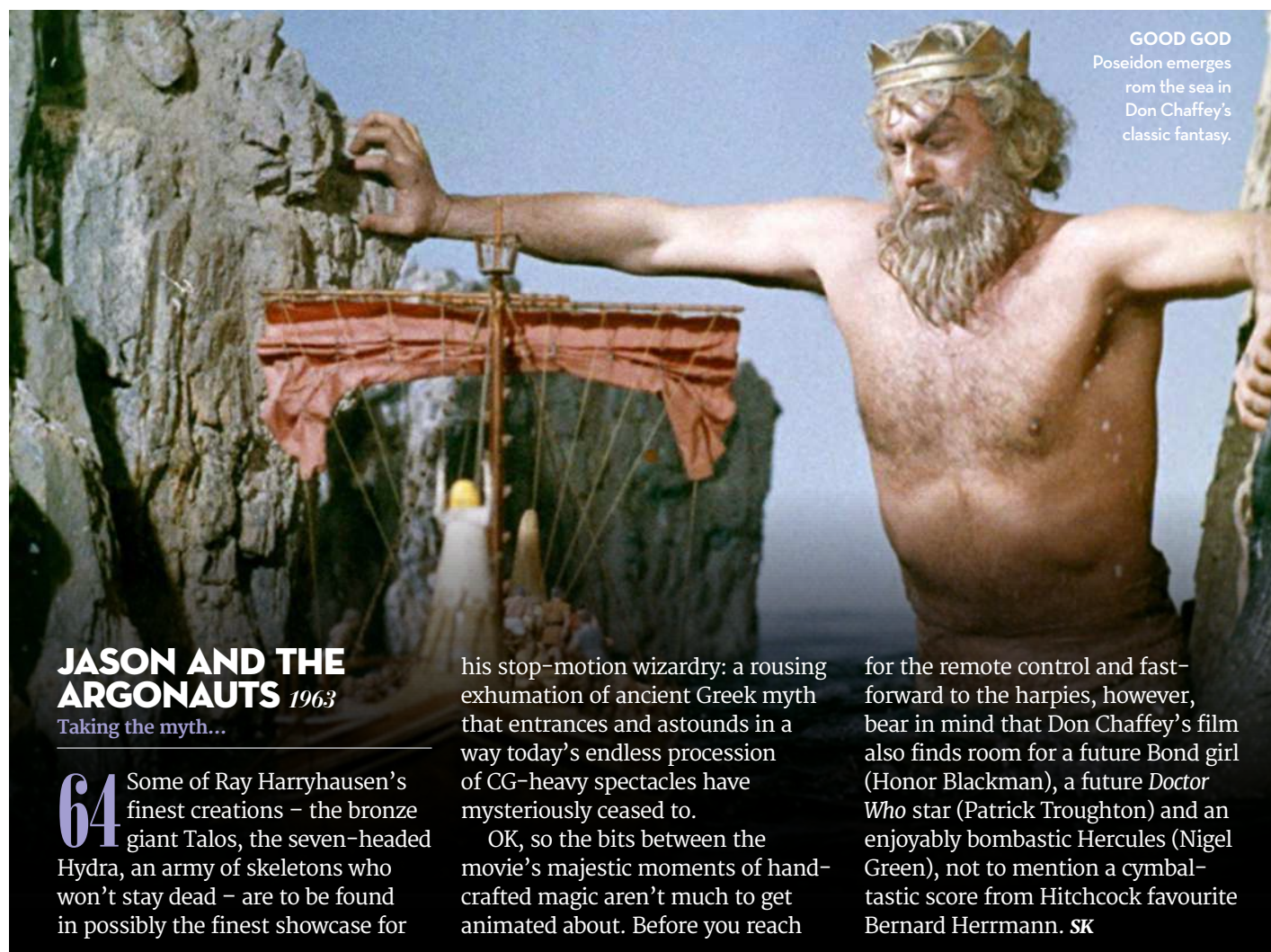
Let's do the time warp.

62 Christopher Nolan pays homage to the scale of the sci-fi epics that imprinted on him in his earliest childhood cinema visits, but this trip across time and space – the highest-grossing original film of 2014 – is warmer than Kubrick's odyssey and more cerebral than *Star Wars*. Matthew McConaughey's Cooper is an engineer given a fateful chance to pilot a NASA mission seeking out habitable worlds, in a near-future in which Earth is blighted by crop failure and endless dust storms (shot in tangibly gritty style by DoP Hoyte van Hoytema, on 35mm and IMAX film). The VFX both practical and digital are jaw-dropping, but nothing compares to the close-ups of McConaughey's reactions to discovering that, as a result of timey tribulations, his kids have aged faster than he has. Eye-popping. Brainscrumbling. Heartbreaking. **MM**

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS 2002

Precioussss mettle...

63 Having delivered spectacular proof of concept with *Fellowship*, Peter Jackson raised the bar with its follow-up. A watershed for CG cinema, *Two Towers* offers the post-Jar Jar revelation that people made of pixels can be usefully employed in motion pictures. Within minutes, the movie belongs to Gollum – a volatile, damaged, all-too-human creation who sheds intense light on themes of power and corruption that snake through Tolkien's trilogy. The scene where Gollum/Sméagol have a split-personality spat is so startling, it takes another epic showdown – this time between two heaving armies – to top it. The Battle Of Helm's Deep isn't just the franchise's stand-out set-piecer; it's a benchmark for the art of on-screen war. **ML**



GOOD GOD
Poseidon emerges from the sea in Don Chaffey's classic fantasy.

JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS 1963

Taking the myth...

64 Some of Ray Harryhausen's finest creations – the bronze giant Talos, the seven-headed Hydra, an army of skeletons who won't stay dead – are to be found in possibly the finest showcase for

his stop-motion wizardry: a rousing exhumation of ancient Greek myth that entrances and astounds in a way today's endless procession of CG-heavy spectacles have mysteriously ceased to.

OK, so the bits between the movie's majestic moments of hand-crafted magic aren't much to get animated about. Before you reach

for the remote control and fast-forward to the harpies, however, bear in mind that Don Chaffey's film also finds room for a future Bond girl (Honor Blackman), a future *Doctor Who* star (Patrick Troughton) and an enjoyably bombastic Hercules (Nigel Green), not to mention a cymbal-tastic score from Hitchcock favourite Bernard Herrmann. **SK**

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST 1991

Saved by the Belle.

65 The first animated film to be nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards, *Beauty And The Beast* instantly became one of the most beloved in the Disney canon. Thirty years on, it remains a contender as one of the very best in their back catalogue. The Oscar-winning songs and score by composer Alan Menken and lyricist Howard Ashman deserve no small credit for its success, and the glorious backdrops – from its forbidding forests to the gleaming, CG-augmented ballroom – place it among the most immersive environs in animation before the hand-drawn style became extinct (the 2017 live-action adaptation with Emma Watson was one of Disney's better remakes). Throw in an oily villain in the form of burly brute Gaston and a delicately handled interspecies romance and it's no surprise that this tale has stood the test of time. **MM**



SUNSHINE 2007

Let there be light...

66 Danny Boyle's least favourite of his own films is also the most underrated. It's 50 years in the future, and mankind's only hope to restart the sun is a nuclear bomb delivered by the ominously named Icarus II. Shaky science aside, the film goes to great lengths to convince: Boyle made his appropriately international cast (including Cillian Murphy and Michelle Yeoh) live together during shooting, and constructed real sets to ground the shimmering SFX. Along with John Murphy's soul-stirring score, and Alex Garland's searching dialogue, it's Boyle's tactile touch that brings the film to life: whether entranced by Mercury pirouetting around the sun, or refreshed by CG waves, we feel what the crew members do, even as they face fiery oblivion. Frankly, if you're bored of *Sunshine*, you're bored of cinema. **MG**



LABYRINTH 1986

Dance magic dance...

67 An extravagant family puppet adventure or a dark coming-of-age exploration of teenage sexual awakening? *Labyrinth* works on numerous levels thanks to Jim Henson's fever-dream vision, Terry Jones' Python-esque script, George Lucas' editing smarts (he helped with the final cut) and the sensuality of star David Bowie. Focusing on a stropky teen (a 14-year-old Jennifer Connelly) whose baby bro is snatched by goblin king Jareth (Bowie) – prompting an epic rescue mission through a creature-crammed maze – *Labyrinth* is a triumph of physical, in-camera effects and Grimm storytelling. And despite Bowie's potentially de-railing posing pouch, the late star's otherworldliness is the key to the success of the *Labyrinth* world, and in delivering layered themes of sexual attraction/revulsion and yep, female emancipation. **JC**

DUNE 2021

A spice odyssey.

68 Arguably the most influential sci-fi book of the 21st century (everything from *Star Wars* to *Game Of Thrones* owes it a debt), Frank Herbert's *Dune* was long considered 'unfilmable' for good reason – the joy is in the detail, and movies don't have the luxury of a 20-plus-hour runtime. Despite this, Denis Villeneuve's adaptation of *Dune*'s first half scarcely puts a foot wrong, elegantly streamlining the novel's labyrinthine tale of warring houses and its rich world-building, while replacing Herbert's internalised storytelling with poetic and consistently awe-inspiring visuals. To create the alluring but dangerous desert planet of Arrakis, where colossal sandworms devour anyone who dares step foot on the sands, Villeneuve and his team shot in the deserts of Wadi Rum, Jordan and Abu Dhabi, with results so tactile and transportive you'll be shaking the spice out of your hair as the credits roll. A modern masterpiece. **JF**



WINGS OF DESIRE 1987

Heaven can wait.

69 The director who called his film company Road Movies came home with his best film. After various tales of travel, Wim Wenders returned to Berlin for his romantic-realist fantasy, where Bruno Ganz's angel Daniel roams unseen among humans and falls for a circus acrobat. A free-floating reverie of tremendous expressive force and poetic resonance, *Desire* blossoms between DP Henri Alekan's hypnotically timeless images (using '30s filters) and its timely take on Berlin history before the Wall's fall. The result was crossover catnip for arthouse regulars and romantics, drawn to its historical resonances, rapturous beauty and affirmative romanticism. Nick Cave gives an electric cameo singing 'From Her To Eternity' but – as in spiritual predecessor *A Matter Of Life And Death* – love's promise trounces eternity as Daniel renounces his wings. **KH**



WESTWORLD 1973

Robot wars.

70 *The Magnificent Seven* meets *The Terminator* in this Michael Crichton-directed yarn about a dude ranch resort whose animatronic automatons start gunning down the tourists. Yes, it's basically *Jurassic Park* with cowboys instead of dinosaurs and Yul Brynner as the T-Rex. Where that film's target is scientific hubris, though, this one has an altogether more unsettling hypothesis – that the machines we build to make our lives more diverting have the power to destroy us, not just by going wrong, but by doing their jobs too well. In Richard Benjamin's reluctant hero, meanwhile, we see another example of a familiar '70s paradigm: the put-upon milquetoast who must man up and grow a pair when faced with a relentless and remorseless antagonist. (See also Dustin Hoffman in *Straw Dogs* and Jon Voight in *Deliverance*.) **NS**

E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL

1982

Spielberg dials up the emotion...

71 Spielberg, aliens, box-office records... It all sounds positively humongous but no other Hollywood blockbuster is as intimate as *E.T.* Rooted in the director's own past, when an imaginary friend helped him through his parents' divorce, this heart-rending fantasy has the camera adopt a child's-eye perspective as lonely Elliott (Henry Thomas) befriends a stranded intergalactic botanist with a penchant for Reese's Pieces. All sorts of readings have been applied to the film (Christian parable, anyone?), but its uncomplicated plea for tolerance is enough to reduce viewers to tears.

As is the 20th Anniversary Edition – Spielberg's digital tinkering upset purists and besmirched childhoods, though he later half-admitted his error, saying, "I always tell people to go back to the '82 version." *JG*

PHONE HOME

E.T. wants to go home after being stranded on Earth all alone.



SKY HIGH

Yoda (Frank Oz) trains Jedi Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill).



STAR WARS: EPISODE V - THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (1980)

Daddy's home...

72 Five reasons why *Episode V* rules the galaxy: 1) It made an imperishable icon out of a bounty hunter whose main activity is cradling his space rifle. 2) It features some of the most urgent violin sawing of John Williams' career ('The Imperial March', 'The Asteroid Field'). 3) It reveals God to be a Muppet, without seeming kitsch or undignified (good job they didn't go with Plan A, mind: a monkey in a mask). 4) It's the most beautiful-looking space movie since 2001, from Hoth's cool blue glow to the dark inferno of the Carbon Freezing Chamber, a celebration of orange worthy of a Kia-Ora ad. And 5) It coins the best two-word riposte since "Nobody's perfect" (Solo's "I know")... then tops it with the most devastating four-word bombshell since "Soylent Green is people!" **ML**



ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND 2004

Delete as applicable.

73 Jim Carrey can't get Kate Winslet out of his head in Michel Gondry's romantic fantasy: a Charlie Kaufman-scripted Rubik's Cube of a movie that imagines a world in which memories can be erased from the cerebellum, for a price. Whether that price is really one worth paying is a dilemma that Carrey's sadsack Joel grapples with as he starts to realise just how much he loves Winslet's Clementine – the flame-haired embodiment of the manic pixie dream-girl archetype – at the very moment he's having her wiped off his cortex. A stellar supporting cast (Elijah Wood, Mark Ruffalo, Kirsten Dunst) plays second fiddle to such imaginative set-pieces as Clementine and Joel hiding out in his infant self's subconscious: a sequence whose miniature Carrey was achieved, not with digital effects, but with old-fashioned, in-camera sleight-of-hand. **NS**

THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD 1951

Who goes there?

74 One of John Carpenter's favourite movies – it plays on TV in *Halloween* and he remade it in 1982 as *The Thing* – this is set in an arctic outpost and pits a US Air Force crew and a team of scientists against a rampaging man-in-a-suit monster. Christian Nyby is the credited director, but many attribute this taut, tense classic to producer Howard Hawks, whose fingerprints are all over it. What's not in doubt is its quality or its box-office clout, for it was the biggest sci-fi hit of 1951 and is now rightly regarded as one of the best of the '50s SF movies, even if *Variety* then sniffed "it lacks genuine entertainment values". Well, seeing the monster axed, torched, electrocuted and attacked by dogs is entertainment enough for us. **JG**

UNDER THE SKIN 2013

The Female of the species...

75 Brit visionary Jonathan Glazer stripped Michel Faber's novel to the bone for this startling adaptation, and cannily cast Scarlett Johansson – an actress of otherworldly beauty – as The Female, who cruises Scotland in a white van to pick up men and entice them to a terrible fate. As beautiful and touching as it is disturbing, *Under The Skin* swirls with unforgettable images and grants viewers a new perspective through which to view the peculiarities of human behaviour. Perhaps even more extraordinary than this bold, mysterious film that announced itself as an instant classic, is the manner in which it was made: a bewigged Johansson picked up real guys on the streets of Glasgow who were filmed with hidden cameras and only informed of their involvement after. Now that's what you call keeping it (sur)real. **RJ**

ALADDIN 1992

A stroke of Genie-us.

76 One of the jewels in the Mouse House's early '90s golden crown – sandwiched between *Beauty And The Beast* and *The Lion King* – the One Thousand And One Nights of Arabian folklore gets the animated treatment to thrilling effect. Following street rat Aladdin as he carefully uses three wishes to woo Princess Jasmine, the sand-swept adventure employed winning songs and new-fangled tech (the CG-animated Cave of Wonders still holds up) to charming effect, but the ace up its sleeve was Robin Williams' Genie: a blue, bearded force-of-nature supercharged by the late comedian's star power. It's a marvel to see Williams cut loose, unfettered by his human body, and Genie's bromance with Al is the film's key relationship. Audiences lapped up its mixture of magic, swashbuckling and improv-ed comedy, making it 1992's highest-grossing film. **MM**

LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE 1946

Be our guest, s'il vous plaît...

77 Despite Oscar-winning claims by Disney and the much-loved 1980s' TV series, this is the definitive screen version of *Beauty And The Beast*. That's chiefly because French Surrealist Jean Cocteau willingly submits to fairytale logic and begs us to share his "childlike simplicity" in the film's opening caption – a plea all the more vital when 'wonders' can today be created digitally. Cocteau's primitive FX consist largely of actors encased in scenery, copious smoke and Jean Marais in a hairy costume, but remain special in the truest sense – vividly memorable and enchanting. Cocteau is also attuned to the story's thematic possibilities. It works as a tale of sexual awakening, but there's a latent political message in Belle falling for her captor. Made in the aftermath of WW2 and French occupation, the romance symbolically restores France's wounded psyche. **SK**



EASTERN PROMISE

Ten-year-old heroine Chihiro Ogino is escorted to a whole new world.

SPIRITED AWAY 2001

Miyazaki-cal mystery tour.

78 A young girl unwittingly steps into a wonderland where she encounters fantastic beasts and comes of age... If the on-paper outline of *Spirited Away* owes a lot to Lewis Carroll's adventures in

Wonderland, then the execution is 100 per cent Hayao Miyazaki. From the rapture of flight to the cuteness of tiny soot monsters, the Oscar-winning, box-office-busting anime is a dazzling purge of the director's pet themes. And though the story seems to flit from one escapade to the next like a manic firefly, it never untethers

from heroine Chihiro's emotional state. Misery at moving home; sorrow at seeing loved ones change (literally, her parents becoming porkers); triumph at bathing a 'stink spirit' without throwing up... Even as your eyes and brain struggle to keep up, *Spirited Away* keeps on giving you the feels. **ML**

BLADE RUNNER 1982

The future of cinema.

79 Between the pre-release Workprint and 2007's Final Cut, there are seven different versions of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*. Every one is of interest – even the theatrical release with its droll Harrison Ford voiceover has its advocates – but it wasn't until the '92 Director's Cut that the neo-noir masterpiece submerged under a layer of studio interference came to the surface. Loosely adapted from Philip K. Dick's typically brain-bending novel, the story of Ford's bounty hunter and the recently escaped Replicants he's tasked with "retiring" is driven by a Big Philosophical Question – what does it mean to be human? Scott's rain-soaked LA streets set the visual template for cyberpunk on screen, Vangelis' synth soundscape drips atmosphere and Rutger Hauer's poetic antagonist Roy Batty is one of cinema's all-time-great creations. Timeless. **JF**



HIT THE DECK
Harrison Ford's antihero Deckard dangles above a futuristic Los Angeles.

EX MACHINA 2015

She's a real piece of work...

80 The Oscar that Alex Garland's directorial debut won for its visual effects – at the expense, it should be said, of such heavy-hitters as *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *Mad Max: Fury Road* – may have been unexpected. But it was no less than the film deserved for its masterful evocation of fem-bot Ava (Alicia Vikander), a sentient android whose only too visible moving parts don't make her any less alluring to her creator (Oscar Isaac) and the young programmer (Domhnall Gleeson) he invites to give her a road test. Few films have addressed, quite so literally, the seductive dangers of artificial intelligence and interactive software. Strip away *Ex Machina*'s Pinter-esque stylings, though, and you're left with a fairy tale: about a 21st Century Pinocchio who'll do anything – anything – to become real. **NS**

DARK STAR 1974

Carpenter's smokin' debut.

81 Most fondly remembered for utilising a beachball as an alien (no, really), *Dark Star* set out to puncture the pomposity of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey* by manning a space mission with four stoners who spend their time topping up tans, listening to rock music and being tickled by the aforementioned ET. Made by film students John Carpenter (who, of course, went on to make *Halloween* four years later) and Dan O'Bannon at University of Southern California, this \$60,000, 68-minute spaced oddity was picked up by producer Jack H. Harris, who paid for 15 additional minutes in order to secure a theatrical release. Cult classic status arrived with the home video boom of the early '80s, and Carpenter's "*Waiting For Godot* in space", as he describes it, has emerged through the fog of time and marijuana to stand as one of the great hippy movies. **JG**

METROPOLIS 1927

A very Lang engagement.

82 Surrealist godhead Luis Buñuel called it "two films glued together by their bellies", while sci-fi author H.G. Wells claimed it was pitched "at the mental age of 17". Yet time has vindicated Fritz Lang's dystopian epic, not least due to the echoes of its future cityscapes and subtexts in *Blade Runner*, *The Matrix*, Queen videos and beyond. The two-year shoot, ballooning budget and 30,000 extras made it the *Avatar* of silent cinema, but the ripping plot about decadent one-percenters and exploited underclasses in a corporate world speaks equally loudly to today. And if some savage cuts left plot-strands about cross-class love and robotic girls under-integrated for decades, 2008's rediscovery of lost footage supplied the narrative glue to restore *Metropolis* to its standard-setting glory: as an imaginative triumph built to last. **KH**



STARSHIP TROOPERS 1997
Deep space nein...

83 Though many shades shy of subtle, even by director Paul *Showgirls* Verhoeven's standards, this gung-ho intergalactic war film based on Robert A. Heinlein's novel had early critics thinking it celebrated, rather than satirised, fascism. As Casper Van Dien and his 90210-alike comrades battle an array of extraordinary CG bugs, Verhoeven, who grew up in Nazi-occupied Holland, shows how "war makes fascists of us all". An army-recruitment advert is a shot-for-shot homage of *Triumph Of The Will* (1935), by Nazi propagandist Leni Riefenstahl, Van Dien's superiors wear Gestapo-style uniforms, and one wag nicknamed it 'All Quiet On The Final Frontier'. The gleeful violence and unapologetic T&A may have raised eyebrows, but what could be more subversive than hiding a political critique amid the glossiest popcorn cinema? **MG**

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL 1951
Klaatu barada nikto...

84 If you want a planet to take your warnings about the apocalypse seriously, it helps to bring along an indestructible robot helpmate with devastating destructive powers. That would appear to be the moral in Robert Wise's cautionary parable, a cut above the lion's share of 1950s sci-fis thanks to the sincerity of its message, the superiority of its FX and the Christ-like dignity Michael Rennie lends to his intergalactic truth speaker – a quality that inexplicably escaped Keanu Reeves, in Scott Derrickson's forgettable 2008 remake. The star of the piece, of course, is implacable bodyguard Gort, eight feet of menace with Lock Martin, the lanky doorman at Grauman's Chinese Theater, sweating buckets inside of him. Bernard Herrmann's spooky, Theremin-inflected score, meanwhile, is one of the reasons Danny Elfman took up composing. **NS**

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL 2003

Undead men tell no tales...

85 The fantastical element in Gore Verbinski's swashbuckler is also its cleverest: a zombie hex placed on Geoffrey Rush and his crew that doesn't have them searching for treasure so much as trying to return one. Later instalments in the franchise would see Bill Nighy as a squid and Johnny Depp swallowed by the Kraken. Yet there is no beating the grisly simplicity of pirates turning into skeletons in the moonlight, an illusion that saw the film Oscar-nommed for its visual FX. (It might have won too, had it not been for *The Return Of The King*'s clean sweep.) "Splicing the pirate genre and the ghost story was the key," said Verbinski when asked to account for his picture's success. "The supernatural aspect allowed us to have even more fun." **NS**

RUM DEAL

Johnny Depp hits the high seas as Captain Jack Sparrow.





INTO THE WOODS
Han, Leia and Luke
on the forest moon
of Endor.

STAR WARS: EPISODE VI - RETURN OF THE JEDI 1983

It's a wrap!

86 *The Force Awakens* may have ruined its happy ending forever, but there's still much to celebrate in the *Episode* often seen as the black(-gloved) sheep of the original trilogy. It's got it where it counts, kid: the space battle, the father/son showdown, Salacious Crumb's evil laugh... (Plus the name 'Salacious Crumb'. And 'Prune Face'). And where would the cosplay industry be without Slave Leia? Meanwhile, the title's promise of a comeback is no bust: until Rey graduates, *Episode VI* Luke remains the coolest Jedi, a dark knight who'd rather buckle swash than talk *Force*. And if Ewoks beating Stormtroopers is still a hard sell, at least they do it in style – not till *The Inbetweeners 2*'s water slide 'incident' would there be such a memorable set-piece involving logs... **ML**



LOOPER 2012

Time and punishment.

87 After the effortlessly cool high-school noir of *Brick* and the fun but throwaway con capers of *The Brothers Bloom*, Rian Johnson hit a home run with *Looper*, a time-travel thriller with a killer concept: in 2044, Joe (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, under heavy prosthetics) works as a 'looper', a hitman who kills targets sent back in time from the future. When the time comes to close his loop and kill his older self, Old Joe (Bruce Willis) has other ideas. Johnson's rough, rustic sci-fi future demonstrates why he was chosen for *Episode VIII*; this is a lived-in world, and there are real stakes. In a year of huge blockbuster franchises (*The Avengers*, *Skyfall*, *The Dark Knight Rises*), *Looper* was a refreshing bolt from the blue. Despite references to the likes of *The Terminator* and *12 Monkeys*, it also manages to feel like a true original. **MM**

UGETSU MONOGATARI 1953

Japanese ghost story...

88 In Hollywood movies, ghosts tend to be vengeful demons or malevolent wraiths. In Kenji Mizoguchi's masterpiece, spirits are more ambiguous figures, simply killed too early and unwilling to depart the earth. The film combines two tales by author Ueda Akinari into a single story about brothers buffeted by ill-fortune in war-torn, feudal Japan. When one is seduced by a female ghost (Machiko Kyō), a tale of order, chaos and hubris unfurls. It's all the more resonant because Mizoguchi doesn't resort to shock tactics, but blurs the real and supernatural through virtually invisible dissolves and 'how did they do that?' scenery changes. With its ethereal studio-created 'exteriors,' dissonant music and memorable make-up derived from Noh theatre, it achieves a sad, spectral quality worthy of the title's literal translation, *Tales Of The Wind And Rain*. **SK**

THE ABYSS 1989

Water torture.

89 Though James Cameron later made headlines creating H₂O hell on *Titanic*, his first aquatic outing was just as gruelling. Filmed in huge water tanks with the cast pushed to their limits, it went over budget and schedule. Like *Titanic*, the results were worth it. A cautionary tale of deep sea oil drillers looking for a downed US sub and finding oceanic ETs, it isn't merely a taut, suffocating thriller with a wider message about humanity; it also reinvented CGI (ILM's aliens became a new benchmark) and divided audiences with theatrical and director's cut endings. Cameron may have pushed leads Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio to tears and breakdown respectively, but their committed performances elevate *The Abyss* from disposable adventure to masterful character study of man and matrimony under (water) pressure. **JC**

MOULIN ROUGE! 2001

If music be the food of love...

90 Yes, we know Baz Luhrmann's Parisian confection is primarily a musical, but those who focus solely on the singing and dancing may overlook the rich strain of phantasmagorical, Fellini-esque reverie that courses through the film, a seam of fancy that enables the Moon to croon, Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman to cavort in the clouds, and Kylie Minogue to make a fleeting cameo as a flirtatious Absinthe Fairy. (Witness the bit, too, in which Jim Broadbent suddenly appears in a puff of smoke, like *Aladdin*'s genie crossed with Widow Twankey.) Not only that, but the original screenplay – intended from the off as a retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth – also featured an opium-fuelled orgy that would have seen Kidman and McGregor hang out with Sarah Bernhardt and Oscar Wilde. **NS**

REPO MAN 1984

Worth hunting down.

91 Alex 'Moviedrome' Cox's startling directorial debut has worldweary Bud (Harry Dean Stanton) trick LA punk Otto (Emilio Estevez) into joining him as a reposessor of cars. Not the kind of job, you might think, that would plunge someone into a bizarre, dangerous world populated by cops, nuclear scientists and UFO conspiracy theorists, but then Paul Thomas Anderson cites *Repo Man* as a major influence on *Inherent Vice*. Shot, luminously, by the great Robby Muller, it motors along on attitude and sardonic humour, with Cox casting his keen outsider's eye over LA – and Reagan's America. Watching this, it's hard to believe that *The Mighty Ducks* trilogy lurked in Estevez's future, but there's no doubt that Roger Ebert was spot-on when he proclaimed, "Stanton is one of the treasures of American movies." **JG**

UNDERGROUND ONE

Neo (Keanu Reeves) battles against Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving).



THE MATRIX 1999

Pop the red pill...

92 It takes a special film to steal the limelight from *Star Wars*. But, in the summer of 1999, the Wachowskis' neo-noir action thriller *The Matrix* did just that. With its mind-expanding central concept (what if we're all living in a computer, man), impossibly cool anime-

inspired visuals and physics-defying action, *The Matrix* didn't just one-up *Episode I – The Phantom Menace*, it redefined what big-screen science fiction could be. Not that the Wachowskis didn't wear their influences on their sleeves: William Gibson's 1984 cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer* served as a clear thematic influence, while John Woo's balletic gunplay and Hong Kong

cinema's kick-ass kung fu heavily inspired the breathtaking action. Best of all was Bullet Time – an awe-inspiring piece of visual trickery relentlessly imitated, but never bettered, in the years since. The underwhelming sequels that followed, *Reloaded* and *Revolutions*, may have tarnished the series' reputation, but sci-fi doesn't come much more audacious. **JF**

THE WIZARD OF OZ 1939

Lions, witches and munchkins, oh my!

93 MGM's technicolour adap of L. Frank Baum's book following a Kansas schoolgirl whipped away to the magical land of Oz during a tornado was legendarily a box-office flop on release, and only grew into a classic via holiday TV re-runs. It's difficult to see why it wasn't an instant hit, crammed as it is with lavish sets and costumes, ear-worm tunes, innovative practical effects, a winning central performance by Judy Garland and clever conceits (sepia reality/technicolour Oz, framing device, multi-character performances). It's an astonishing and magical feat considering the revolving door of directors and various production problems (burnt witch, poisoned tin man, gonzo dog). But that story remains timeless and its effect on audiences is undimmed by age – whoever and wherever we are, we all want to know we belong. **JC**



OVER THE RAINBOW
The quartet make it to the Land of Oz with heart, brains and courage.

THE PRINCESS BRIDE 1987

Once upon a time...

94 Positioned slam-bang in the middle of an astonishing seven-film run that saw Rob Reiner churn out such classics as *This Is Spinal Tap*, *Stand By Me* and *When Harry Met Sally...*, *The Princess Bride* blends fantasy, romance and comedy as farmhand Westley (Cary Elwes) sets out to rescue true love Princess Buttercup (Robin Wright) from the clutches of the dastardly Prince Humperdinck (Chris Sarandon). At once a warm-hearted, adventure-packed fairytale and a post-modern commentary on the hoary conventions of just such a tale, Reiner's beloved movie juggles tones, genres and comic cameos to dizzying effect. Better still, it never sacrifices its purity while doing so. All this plus the greatest sword fight since Errol Flynn hung up his blade. **JG**

INDEPENDENCE DAY 1996

Appetite for destruction.

95 Yes, the speeches, score, survivalist dog and virus drop are so corny, they practically come on the cob. But even so, Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin's globe-straddling alien-invasion epic raised the bar on disaster-sized spectacle without losing sight of core audience-grabbing values. Emmerich served the game performances, knowing genre nods and fire-ballin' aggro without distancing irony as he whipped old-school, big-ass, Irwin Allen-style entertainment up to modern-effects speed. "It makes *StarGate* look like a video," claimed Devlin ahead of release, a promise lived up to as the White House-blotting trailer barely scraped the surface of the 3,000-plus effects shots. With Will Smith's star wattage maxing the mass appeal, Emmerich made destructo-porn look like so much fun. A guilty pleasure, yes: but still a pleasure. **KH**

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 2003

Middle-earth's crowning glory.

96 The first fantasy film to win Best Picture, *The Return Of The King* had a triumphant night at the 2004 Oscars, winning an incredible, record-breaking 11 out of 11 nominations. Even if the awards were arguably given out of accumulated goodwill for the series, there's very little to find fault with the final *LOTR* film. For all its scale – and the siege of Minas Tirith and the Battle Of The Pelennor fields are as spectacular as any set-pieces ever mounted – there's still plenty of heart, not least when Sam carries Frodo over the finishing line. As the climax to three films' investment, *The Return Of The King*'s multiple endings were necessary. Audiences lapped it up; at the time of its theatrical run, it was only the second film to gross more than \$1bn. **MM**



2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

1968

Ground control to Major Stan...

97 “The ultimate trip” reads the poster for Stanley Kubrick’s groundbreaking collaboration with Arthur C. Clarke; a sci-fi for the peacenik generation that spans space and time like no other movie. Utilising embryonic special effects technology, uncannily recreating spaceflight and gravity, Kubrick’s epic remains a towering achievement, even by his gargantuan standards. Beginning with one of the most audacious cuts in the history of cinema, encompassing man’s evolution from ape to astronaut in the fling of a bone, Kubrick created a sound and light show like no other. From the impossibly elegant Johann Strauss-scored lunar docking sequence to the trippy multi-coloured Star Gate finale, this tale of a Jupiter mission gone awry fulfils Kubrick’s early ambition: to make a film about “Man’s relationship to the universe”. Arguably, the most influential sci-fi ever made. *JM*

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Keir Dullea stars in Kubrick’s epic tale of humanity and evolution.





KHAN IS BACK!
Kirk and the crew of
the USS Enterprise must
stop Khan and his plans
for Project Genesis.

STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN 1982

FULL POWER! DAMN YOU!

98 Galloping around the cosmos might be a game for the young, to part-quote Kirk, but Nicholas Meyer re-energised the Enterprise crew after 1979's stylish but effects-stiffened *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. In place of its predecessor's reverence, incoming helmer Meyer served ripping action-adventure, with little faffing over niceties. Meyer, writer Jack B. Sowards and producer Harve Bennett made no bones about the crew's ages as they dug into Federation archives to resurrect vengeful 1967 uber-villain Khan, played by Ricardo Montalban's chest. Bill Shatner's performance boldly goes to high-camp's frontiers, despite Meyer's attempts to exhaust him with multiple takes: yet even Kirk's quivering cry of "Khaaaaaaan!" excites in the context of warp-speed plotting, James Horner's thrilling attack-mode score and *that* daringly emotive final sacrifice. When Spock died, *Star Trek* was born again. **KH**



TIME BANDITS 1981

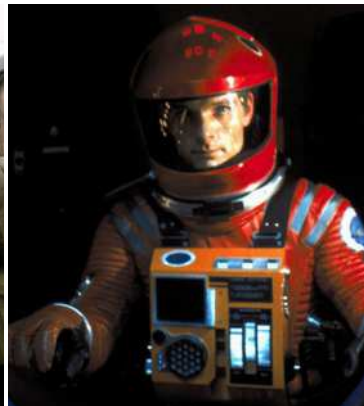
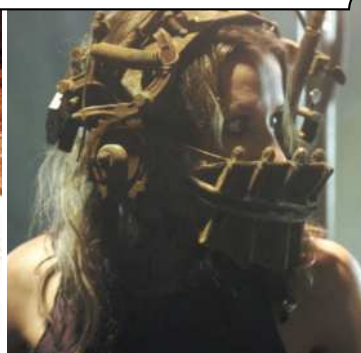
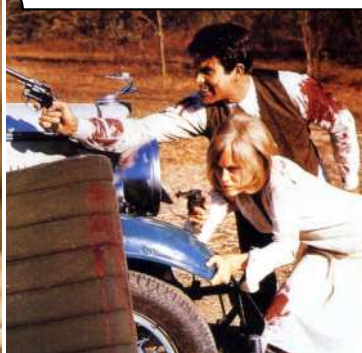
Monty Python for kids.

99 Terry Gilliam's fantasy about a boy's adventure with time-travelling thieves proved that not even live-action can limit the *Monty Python* animator's imagination. Gilliam's bold angles and fertile design are a riposte to notions that British cinema can't think big – even though his heroes are small. Never a natural storyteller, Gilliam finds free reign by loading the surrealism with subtext (a hero who may or may not be dreaming it all) and substance, thanks to co-writer Michael Palin's *Python*-esque piss-take of received historical wisdom: here, Ian Holm's Napoleon really does have a Napoleon complex. The non-stop cameos – Cleese, Connery et al – divert attention from Gilliam's greatest coup: giving a septet of diminutive veterans (including Kenny 'R2-D2' Baker) a rare chance to "do dangerous and heroic things" out of creature costumes. **SK**

INCEPTION 2010

Christopher Nolan plays mind games.

100 It's a testament to *Inception*'s impact just how quickly it was appropriated as cultural shorthand, instantly becoming the byword for anything involving multilayered levels-within-levels. Christopher Nolan is not a director known for talking down to his audience, but this sci-thriller is one of his most rewardingly complex structures, as Leonardo DiCaprio's Dom Cobb leads a team on an infiltration mission to plant a world-changing idea deep in their mark's subconscious. The action thrills – not least the gravity-defying scrap in a revolving corridor – but almost more impressive is the fact it manages to hit home emotionally while balancing its plate-spinning plot. Nolan pays homage to *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (his favourite Bond film) in a snow-capped finale, but it's the endless spinning of the top that'll stay with you. **MM**



TOTAL
FILM
PRESENTS

500

MUST-SEE MOVIES